تاریخ صحافتِ اردو

A History of Urdu Journalism

Nadir Ali Khan

A
HISTORY OF URDU
JOURNALISM

(1822—1857)

by

NADIR ALI KHAN

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FOREWORD

The nineteenth century forms a watershed in the social and intellectual history of India. Old ideological moorings were shaken during this period and the old social order slowly and gradually yielded place to the new. Nothing reflects better the ideological and social postures of the Indians during this transitional period than the journalistic literature. Sometimes hailing the new order, at others bemoaning the waning of the old value-system, this literature mirrors the inner aspirations, hopes and frustrations of the people. Dr. Nadir Ali Khan's excellent study of the Urdu journalistic literature is a contribution of abiding value to the appreciation of Indian ethos at a crucial moment in India's history. His extensive study of contemporary Urdu literature, his rare insight into the processes of social change and, above all, his unique faculty of analysis and interpretation is reflected in this study which opens fresh vistas for the interpretation of socio-political history of modern India.

Lately a French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has studied the culture of a small French village Montaillou on the basis of Jacques Fournier's *Registers*. His work is rightly claimed as constituting a landmark in modern historiography. No such work has so far been undertaken in India. The newspapers from Mirzapur, Benaras, Meerut, Bareilly, Rampur etc., brought to light by Dr. Nadir Ali Khan would one day attract scholars to undertake similar studies of the intellectual and social milieu of Indian towns. Dr. Nadir Ali Khan has prepared ground for the utilisation of Journalistic literature for reconstruction of the cultural history of India during the 19th century. Details of cultural life in Delhi and Lucknow found in the Urdu journals of the period make it abundantly clear that moral degeneration had honeycombed the entire social structure before it was knocked down by the British. 'Schism of body politic' and

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'schism of the soul' had rendered the social system invertebrate and rickety. Sensitive souls like Mir could see the fast-approaching doom

قبائے لالہ و گُل میں جھلک رہی تھی خزاں
بھری بہار میں رویا کئے بہار کو ہم

but the decadent aristocracy was sinking deeper and deeper in licentiousness and lechery. The journalistic literature identified by Dr. Nadir Ali Khan would provide valuable data for reconstructing the social and cultural history of India during this crucial period.

In the closing decades of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Urdu journalism played a very important role in the freedom struggle of the country. It is hoped that the second volume of this scholarly study will carry the story down to 1920, thus providing a veritable background to the ideological and political developments of the post-mutiny period. The role of *Tahzib-u'l-Akhlaq*, *Hamdard*, *Makhzan al-Hilal*, *al-Balagh*, *Zamindar* etc. will then be appreciated in a better historical perspective.

Dr. Nadir Ali Khan deserves commendations for his valuable contribution to history and literature.

I am sure this scholarly study will find place on the bookshelf of every scholar of Urdu Literature, and students of modern Indian history and culture will find in it fresh perspectives of analysis and interpretation.

K A Nizami

Khaliq Ahmad Nizami

Nizami Villa
Sir Syed Road,
Aligarh
12th April 1991

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PREFACE

The present work is an English translation of my Ph.D. thesis—originally written in Urdu—on the history and development of early Urdu journalism. I was drawn to the study of the subject while engaged, way back in the early sixties, in my study of the literary personality and services of MUNSHI NEWAL KISHORE, the doyen of Indian printers and publishers in the nineteenth century. The study proved to be profitable in more than one ways. While compiling a check-list of the work of early Urdu printing—houses as part of my study of the services of Newal Kishore Press, I happened to go through the moth-eaten and mostly incomplete files of the earliest Urdu and Persian newspapers. Comparing the data I had culled from my cursory researches I discovered to my great surprise that in some important respects it did not agree with the information contained in the usual published accounts of the subject. Here was an area of research of the most painstaking variety requiring at the same time a radical revaluation of facts. I also realized that the earliest Urdu newspapers, specially those published from Delhi and Lucknow, might be of value to the social historian of the early nineteenth century containing as they do vivid portraits of contemporary life.

I have introduced my work with a brief chapter, derived from the standard authorities on the subject, on the origin and development of English journalism in India and the various early legislative attempts to control and regulate the Press. Such a background may be found helpful in tracing the origin of Urdu journalism. My original research, however, is contained in the chapters that follow the Introduction. I have deliberately avoided a strictly chronological account of the history of Urdu journalism for two reasons. In the first place, such a scheme would have been confusing for the reader since he would have been kept moving from place to place in quick

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succession, from and to places as far apart as Calcutta and Peshawar, Delhi and Madras. Secondly, in view of the limited circulation of newspapers at that time and the absence of an efficient distributive network, the great majority of the early papers were local rather than national. In view of these factors it was thought more appropriate to follow a geographical rather than a chronological scheme. Of course, the newspapers published from a particular centre have been arranged in a chronological order.

At an early stage of my work I was greatly encouraged—when such encouragement was most needed—by my mentor and guide, the eminent literary critic, Professor Ale Ahmad Suroor then Head of the Department of Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University. His keen and affectionate personal interest, scholarly guidance and critical insight helped me at every stage of my work.

Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, the distinguished historian and medievalist and the former Chairman of the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, was gracious enough to give me encouragement during the preparation of the present work. Without his support, advice and keen personal interest I would have found it difficult to overcome my diffidence in encroaching on alien, historical grounds. He was also kind enough to contribute a Foreword to the book.

My other obligations include those to Mr. Saiyyid Hamid, the former Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, for a generous publication grant. I must also thank my friend and colleague in the Department of English, Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan, for translating the work into English.

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4 April, 1991

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1

English Journalism in India

A. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Beginning

Newspapers of a kind, hand-written and issued mainly from royal or noble courts did exist in India even before the advent of printed newspapers in the country. The real origin, however, of the history of Indian journalism coincides with the establishment of the rule of East India Company which, whatever harm it might have caused in other areas of national life, did certainly mark the beginning of many useful developments in this field. It is interesting to note, however, that in its initial phase it was far from what may be called a "positive" step. Journalism in India owes its origin to the fact that certain dismissed employees of the East India Company had a grouse against the administration and wished to express it through effective public propaganda.*

William Bolts was one such employee who had been dismissed on the ground that he had indulged in private trade while in the Company's service. It was his grouse against the administration which made him decide to bring out a newspaper in order to expose what he thought were the malpractices and corruption within the Company administration. In its turn the Company decided to pass orders of extradition against him

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(18 April 1768).[1] Bolts was thus forced to leave for England where, however, he published his remarkable 500-pages long book, *Considerations on the Indian Affairs*, an *expose* of the corruption and the arbitrary rule of the East India Company. In the Preface he pointed out[2] that the Company had an absolute monopoly over the internal trade in the country, and this was a source of corruption and innumerable malpractices. The country's internal trade, he continued, was on the verge of total collapse. Justice and fair play were non-existent; millions were at the mercy of a few unscrupulous persons at the top, and they divided the loot among themselves. The country was ruled in the most autocratic manner by the force of arms. It was governed neither by the native laws nor by the laws of England. It was difficult to imagine, he wrote, the condition of the common people. Population, industries and revenue were all on the decline. Bengal, that used to pay to the Imperial Court at Delhi a tribute to the tune of millions of rupees only recently, was on the brink of bankruptcy so much so, wrote Mr. Bolts, that very soon the Company would find it difficult to pay salaries to its employees.

Soon after the extradition of Bolts, another employee, this time a Jame Augustus Hicky, fell a victim to the Company's ire. He started publishing a newspaper called *Hicky's Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser* from 29 January 1780. It consisted of four pages of 12″×8″ size with the following inscription in bold letters on its mast-head: "A weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none."[3] In his bold and fearless thinking Hicky was not only a true successor of William Bolts but also a pioneer in many ways. In the political and commercial fields he proved to be a severe critic of the company, and fearlessly exposed its corrupt and inhuman policies.

Even Warren Hastings, the Governor General, and Elijah Empey, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, were not

1. Proceedings of the Selection Committee at the Fort William, cited in Md. Atiq Siddiqui, *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 57.
2. Cited in Abdus Salam Khurshid, *Sahafat*, p. 24.
3. Quoted in S. Natrajan, *A History of the Press in India* (Bombay, 1962), p. 14.

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spared, not to speak of other officers lower down the hierarchy. Legal restrictions served only to inflame him and increase the fury of his ire. The clergy, too, received some of the brickbats. John Zachariah Kiernander, the first Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, was ruthlessly criticized for his greed but not with impunity: Hicky had to serve a four month term in prison along with the payment of a fine of Rs. 500. When this deterrent punishment failed to quench Mr. Hicky's insatiable thirst for revenge, the Governor General was obliged to withdraw postal facilities granted to his paper.[1] Though a deadly blow, it nevertheless failed to suppress the indomitable spirit of Mr. Hicky, and undaunted he wrote that the restrictions placed against his paper were an act of cowardice on the part of the administration. Readers in the coastal areas and in the colonies, continued Hicky, would now be obliged to subscribe to the new paper *India Gazette* or be altogether deprived of news. He warned the authorities that such mean tactics on their part would never succeed in making him docile. And in case, warned Mr. Hicky, the administration legally forced his newspaper to cease publication he would compose ballads and, like Homer, sing them in the streets of Calcutta.[2] Hicky now employed twenty hawkers for distributing the paper and made his attacks on authority even more virulent. The administration took recourse to imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs. 200 but Hicky continued to edit the paper even in jail. At last the Company administration confiscated the printing press in 1782, and the newspaper ceased publication for ever.

Hicky exposed not only political tyranny and economic exploitation but also the moral degradation of the "*nabobs*" of his time. He brought to light the immorality and degeneration of contemporary Calcutta society. In this attempt his newspaper often came close to what is now known as yellow journalism yet the importance of Hicky's contribution to the writing of the social, economic and political history of that period cannot be gainsaid.

1. Vide *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 17.
2. Cited in *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 68.

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India Gazette, Calcutta

Apart from placing legal restrictions on Hicky's journalistic activities, his adversaries also opposed him in his own field by bringing out a weekly newspaper called *India Gazette*. It started publication in November 1780. It closely followed in the footsteps of its contemporary in its journalistic style but changed its tone after *Hicky's Gazette* ceased publication. As it supported the administration, it probably enjoyed official patronage in the form of the withdrawal of postal duty.

Calcutta Gazette, Calcutta

With the return of normalcy in the journalistic world there now appeared a new newspaper called *Calcutta Gazette*. It was first brought out on 4 March 1784. It enjoyed official patronage since it carried the Company's emblem on its mast-head and was distributed among the subscribers at a price equal only to the charge of postal duty. It carried a column of news in Persian also as its editor was a good Persian scholar.

Calcutta Gazette was a weekly newspaper, published every Thursday. Besides news it also carried readers' letters and some poetry. Its news coverage included brief resumes of Supreme Court proceedings and judgments, apart from news from various Indian princely courts and towns. It also published news summaries from British newspapers whenever available. It is interesting to note that some of its issues carried translations of the *ghazals* of the well-known Persian poet Abu Talib Kalim and of stories from the *Baharistan* of Jami. It may safely be said that, on the whole, *Calcutta Gazette* was a living document of contemporary life.

Asiatic Miscellany and Bengal Register

A few years of journalistic activity in the country created a taste for newspapers to the extent that the need was now felt for a scholarly and literary magazine. Thus in 1785 Gordon and Hay began publishing a quarterly magazine called *Asiatic Miscellany and Bengal Register* which ultimately won recognition even among the elite in Britain. It was, however, rather uncommonly and exorbitantly priced at a guinea per issue. Some idea of its usual contents can be had from an advertisement

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in *Calcutta Gazette*[1] which speaks of original and translated articles connected in some way or other with Asia. It tells the reader that the forthcoming issues would carry news and reviews besides sermons and humorous articles on historical and ethical subjects. The reviews, it was promised, would cover nearly all Indian publications during the previous quarter, and the news would include a survey of important events during the same period.

Bengal Journal, Calcutta

A new weekly newspaper, *Bengal Journal*, began publication in February 1785. Thomas Johnson, its owner and editor, was a peace-loving man, and consequently no untoward incident took place during the six years of his ownership of the weekly. However, the publication of the false news of the death of Lord Conwallis (who was in fact busy fighting the Marathas) in the paper after it had been purchased by William Duane in 1791 (in partnership with two lawyers) led to a row with the authorities. William Duane was threatened with extradition. He was, however, forced to give up both the ownership and editorship of the paper, and was pardoned when M. Fumeron, the French Agent, pleaded with the administration on his behalf.

Indian World, Calcutta

The pardon gave William Duane an opportunity to bring out another weekly, and the same year he began publishing the *Indian World*. He continued to do so for a period of three years, but again there was a confrontation with the authorities in 1794, and the editor was forced to leave for England the same year.

Oriental Magazine, Calcutta

A monthly magazine called *Oriental Magazine or Calcutta Amusement* was first issued in April 1785 followed by *Calcutta Chronicle*, a weekly newspaper, in February 1786.

1. ***Calcutta Gazette*, No. 150 (11 January, 1787).**

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The Bengal Asiatic Society was established on the 15th of January 1784. The scope of the researches of the society was confined to the geographical boundaries of the Asian continent. Its activities related to the study of man and nature within the stipulated boundaries. It was in 1788 that the Society began to publish the results of its research in the form of a journal called *Asiatic Research*. The journal included research and learned articles besides maps, pictures and sketches.

In addition to the above, there are references to two other magazines: *Calcutta Magazine and Orient Museum* and *Calcutta Monthly Journal*. The latter was edited by Dr. J. White who published in it a monthly summary of news intended for readers in the home country.

Bengal Harkaru, Calcutta

Dr. Charles Maclean brought out a weekly newspaper called *Bengal Harkaru* the tone of which was not to the liking of the administration right from the beginning. Consequently, even the personal correspondence of the editor was subjected to censorship leading ultimately to his extradition from the country in 1798—a fate similar to that of his predecessor William Duane.

Asiatic Mirror, Calcutta

Asiatic Mirror was first issued in 1799. It was a weekly newspaper edited by Charles K. Bruce. Mr. Bruce was, however, severely taken to task by the authorities for the publication of certain details about the campaign against Tipu Sultan. Threatened with extradition, the editor apologised. Consequently, no action was taken against him.

Morning Post, Telegraph and **Oriental Star**

We learn from official reports about three more Calcutta newspapers in 1799. The first of these, *Morning Post*, a weekly, was owned in partnership by three men: Archibald Thompson, Paul Ferris and Moreley Greenway. The editor was one Dr. Bush. When, for certain reasons, the editor resigned, the weekly came to be edited by the three owners. The next was the *Telegraph*, another weekly, jointly owned by Holt Mckenly and

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H.D. Wilson. The latter also edited the paper. *Oriental Star*, still another weekly, was owned and edited by Richard Fleming.

Madras Newspapers

Apart from Calcutta, newspapers were published from Madras also. *Madras Courier* was the first Madras newspaper and was brought out in 1785. It was a weekly newspaper printed on four pages of 20″ × 12″ size. Two more pages would be added whenever material from British newspapers was available. The first two pages would usually contain a summary of news from Britain while the third page was reserved for Indian news and correspondents' letters. The last was a literary page containing poems and essays. It also carried advertisements. The newspaper received official patronage in ample measure as it consistently supported government policy. A change, however, took place in the paper's policy in 1789 when one Mr Boyd took over as its editor. As the change was not to the liking of the authorities Boyd was obliged to resign in 1791. He brought out his own newspaper called *Madras Harkaru* a year later. It was a weekly published under rather adverse circumstances but with official patronage. It ceased publication in 1792 owing to the death of its editor.

Another weekly, *Madras Gazette*, was brought out in January 1795 under the editorship of R. Williams. A fearless journalist, he wrote heedless of government susceptibilities. The administration was therefore obliged to introduce censorship and withdraw postal facilities.

A few months after the first issue of *Madras Gazette* another weekly called *India Herald* was launched by one Mr. Humphreys. This was done without authority as Mr. Humphreys was not on good terms with the administration. He had certainly applied for official permission but his request was turned down. Thus published without authority the *India Herald* fearlessly wrote against the Company administration. It did not even spare the Prince of Wales. Ultimately, orders of extradition were passed against Mr. Humphreys and he was deported.

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Mysteriously enough, he disappeared from the ship and could be traced neither in England nor in India.[1]

Bombay Newspapers

Bombay lagged a little behind the other Presidencies so far as the publication of newspapers is concerned. It was only on 25 June 1790 that its first newspaper, *Bombay Gazette*, saw the light of the day. It was a weekly edited by W.S. Cowper. Besides commercial and other news from Bombay its coverage also included news from the Dutch and Portuguese colonies. Occasionally, there was news from the Persian Gulf areas, the island of Armos, coastal areas of Malabar upto Cape Comorin. Though the paper was loyal to the Company and was published without let or hindrance, it nevertheless came once into conflict with the authorities when it published some criticism of the police. Thereafter it was subjected to censorship.

The next newspaper to appear from Bombay was *Bombay Herald* soon followed by *Bombay Courier*. The last-named was owned by Douglas Nicholson and edited by Luke Ashburner. It was printed at the press owned by Rustamji Keshpati. Its main distinction was that it was the first newspaper to carry advertisements in native languages like Urdu, Gujrati, Marathi and Kannada. Another weekly newspaper to be published from Bombay was *Bombay Observer* first issued in 1791.

B. PRESS REGULATIONS

Newspapers reflect popular feelings and thoughts, and the foundations of good and efficient administration rest to a large extent on freedom of expression allowed to journalists. A sensible, well-informed and sincere journalist may, without exaggeration, be regarded as a greater defender of the country than a military commander. Foreign invasions perhaps do not cause as much harm to a nation as subversive activities within the country caused mainly by disaffection among the populace. It is the journalists in a country who, through exposures of malpractices and through healthy and constructive criticism, provide an adequate safety valve for popular discontent. It is

1. S. Natrajan, *A History of the Press in India.*

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because of this role that autocrats have always been rather unfriendly towards journalists. Newspapers have generally proved to be a panacea for the ills of arbitrary rule, exploitation and political tyranny, and have to a large extent defended the rights and privileges of common people.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the nation had virtually reached the nadir of its socio-political destiny owing to the military designs, economic exploitation, shrewd and selfish diplomacy of the East India Company and the internal dissensions, incompetence in defence matters and lackadaisical attitude towards administration on the part of the native potentates. The drain on Indian currency and the fabulously high salaries paid to Company officers were a source of impoverishment in the country. The nation was on the verge of total breakdown. It was under such circumstances that journalists began to give expression to their, largely muted, criticism of the powers that be, but, unfortunately, many stalwarts and champions of free expression were totally silenced, or more commonly, deported back to the home country.

The activities of the East India Company were a strange mixture of unprecedented chicanery, political deceit, arbitrariness and tyranny. Thus, any one raising the voice of justice in that age or trying to expose the tyranny of the Company rule found the place too hot for himself and had perforce to leave the country sooner or later. Laws and regulations with regard to journalistic practices hardly existed then, and the Company administration had no guidelines in the matter, yet it blatantly substituted arbitrariness for legally-sanctioned procedures and made lawlessness the law. Powerful rivals like William Bolts, James Hicky and Duane continued to be forcibly deported from the country.

Censorship was first legally introduced in Madras Presidency, and so Madras newspapers were the first to come under its iron grip. Freedom of expression was thus totally lost. Any indiscretion on a journalist's part would soon lead to an official reprimand resulting in the editor's apologies. The situation in the Bengal Presidency was a little different. Censorship there, though not legal was yet effective, and editors were generally

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discreet. Any intentional or unintentional lapse on their part would immediately be regretted.

With the advent of Lord Wellesley as the New Governor General things become a little too hot for the Company's rule in India. The French power, on the one hand, posed a serious threat to British supremacy while the patriotically inspired Tipu Sultan, on the other, had gradually acquired political power the dimensions of which were an equally serious, if not sinister, challenge to the expanding English hegemony. Wellesley's administration was also faced with another danger: there were powerful disgruntled and ambitious elements among his own compatriots secretly engaged in nefarious designs to bring about the Governor General's disgrace and downfall. It was as a part of such designs that, while Wellesley was engaged in fighting the Sultan, certain facts and figures relating to the comparative strengths of the European and Indian forces were published in *Asiatic Mirror* by its editor, Charles Bruce. These revelations were contrary to the Company's interests. Wellesley was naturally upset, and in great agitation of mind wrote to the Commander-in-Chief:

> I shall take an early opportunity of transmitting rules for the conduct of the whole tribe of editors; in the meantime, if you cannot tranquillise the editor of this and other mischievous publications, be so good as to suppress their papers by force, and send their persons to Europe. (April 1799).[1]

The very next month (May 1799) Wellesley's intentions expressed themselves in the form of a five-point Press Regulation Code according to which

1. It was necessary for every newspaper to carry the names of its printer, editor and publisher in the printline;
2. it was necessary for every editor and proprietor to inform the Secretary of the Government about his name and address;
3. no paper was to be published on Sundays;

1. Quoted in S. Natrajan, *A History of the Press in India*, p. 23.

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4. prior inspection by the Secretary of the Government was necessary for every newspaper before starting publication;
5. immediate deportation to Europe was the stipulated penalty for the violation of any of the above regulations.[1]

At the same time rules were also framed for the guidance of the Secretary in the discharge of his duties as Press Censor. These guidelines suggested a ban on the publication of information regarding the financial condition of the Company, troop movement, skipping operations, naval or military preparations and movement of supplies, etc. A ban was also proposed on reprinting of extracts from European newspapers with a possible adverse effect on the relations of British power with Indian states. Some of the other banned items included observations directly or indirectly communicating vital information to an enemy, causing alarm or commotion in the Company's territories and suggesting the possibility of war and peace with any of the Indian powers. All private scandals and libels on individuals were also banned.[2] Apart from these negative steps Wellesley also toyed with the idea of issuing a newspaper or gazette for the publication of official news and advertisements. He also proposed to publish a selection of important laws and regulations in the projected newspaper for the benefit of general public. The proposal was aimed at undoing the evil influence of irresponsible journalism. Owing, however, to financial considerations the proposal could not be translated into reality. In another preventive measure, Wellesley flatly refused permission to the missionaries to set up a printing press in Calcutta, thus obliging them to move to Serampore.

The victories in the Deccan had added so much to the political stature of Wellesley that the mere prestige of the Governor-General was enough to restrain the undesirable activities of the journalists. No one had now the courage to protest against the official restrictions. All the seven weekly newspapers

1. S. Natrajan, *ibid.*, p. 23.
2. S. Natrajan, pp. 23-24.

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then being published in Bengal Presidency[1] surrendered and agreed to comply with the Regulations in letter and in spirit. A few years earlier in 1786, there had been at least four weeklies and a monthly in circulation in the Presidency but now (1799), owing mainly to the newly-imposed restrictions, only one weekly newspaper, *India Gazette*, remained in the field; the rest soon disappeared. Since *Calcutta Gazette* was more or less an official organ and not an independent newspaper, its name does not figure in the official list of newspapers.[2]

The story of Wellesley's political success which had begun with his victories against Tipu Sultan ended with his failure to capture the fort of Bharatpur. The fort was assailed five times successively by Colonel Johnson and Lord Lake but to no avail; a large part of the Company's forces were destroyed on the battlefield. This defeat was one of the main causes why Wellesley was disgraced and ultimately recalled in 1805. His departure from India was a signal to irresponsible journalism to raise its head again. Pre-censorship was now largely put into abeyance. News about military movements and other secret information began to be published in newspapers and other publications. All this obliged the Governor General-in-Council to issue prohibitory instructions against six out of the seven Calcutta newspapers. Other restrictions were also imposed on newspapers and printing presses. Public meetings were prohibited. These restrictions, however, led to a spate in the publication of prohibited matter through anonymous pamphlets. The Christian missionaries at Serampore began to publish pamphlets that contained provocative attacks on Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs which obliged Lord Minto to ask the missionaries to transfer their printing press from Serampore to Calcutta. They appealed against the order on financial grounds but agreed voluntarily to observe the restrictions of censorship. In addition, all printing presses in Calcutta were ordered to give the name of printer and publisher in the print-line on all kinds of publications whatsoever. John Adam was appointed to look

1. *Bengal Harkaru, Morning Post, Telegraph, Calcutta Courier, Oriental Star, India Gazette, Asiatic Mirror* and *Calcutta Gazette.*
2. **S. Natrajan, p. 24.**

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after the department of censorship. As these efforts bore little fruit, orders were issued in 1812 that all publications and advertisements, excluding those relating to the sale and purchase and letting of houses, should be submitted to pre-censorship.

The imposition of the above-mentioned regulations and the appointment of John Adam as Censor put an end to the unrestrained freedom of the press. Hence, when Lord Hastings took over as Governor General in 1812, he found that the Press in both Bombay and Calcutta Presidencies was remarkably moderate in all its activities. However, he issued the following guidelines to printers and publishers:

1. All printing presses were required to submit proof sheets of newspapers, supplements and extra publications etc. to the Chief Secretary;
2. The proof sheets of advertisements also were to be censored by the Chief Secretary;
3. The titles of all books to be printed were to be submitted to the Chief Secretary. He could ask the printer to submit the manuscript of any book he wanted and withhold permission to print if he found the material objectionable;
4. All the previous regulations were to remain in force.

There is little doubt that, notwithstanding the rigour of John Adam Regulations, Hastings himself was quite liberal in his attitude towards the Press. Adam fell ill, and the duties of the Censor were taken over by Bayley. It was at this time that the official Censor came into conflict with Heatly, the editor of the *Morning Post*. Bayley wanted Heatly to exclude certain passages from an article that had been submitted to the former for pre-censorship. The editor was not willing to oblige and, as the Censor still insisted on their exclusion, took the plea that he being of Indian origin was not required to comply with regulations in force for European editors. (Heatly's mother was an Indian though his father was of British extraction.) Not being a European he could not be punished with extradition. Lord Hastings reacted by abolishing press censorship altogether. Since, however, he did not at the same time wish to displease the Court of Directors (who were opposed to the freedom of

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the Press), a directive was issued on 19 August 1818 forbidding the publication of the following in newspapers:

1. Adverse comments on the measures and proceedings of the Honourable Court of Directors or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India; comments on the political transactions of the local administration; and the use of offensive remarks at the public conduct of the members of the Council, the judges of the Supreme Court or the Lord Bishop of Calcutta;
2. Discussions aimed at creating fear or suspicion among the natives of India or hurting their religious beliefs;
3. Publication of extracts from English and other language newspapers that came under any of the above heads or that may otherwise affect the British prestige in India;
4. Private scandals and remarks of a personal nature that may lead to dissensions and conflict in society.[1]

With a view to engendering mutual trust between the Press and the administration and in order to encourage a sense of responsibility among the editors the following proclamation was also issued along with the above-mentioned regulations:

> Relying on the prudence and discretion of the editors for their careful observance of these rules, the Governor General-in-Council is pleased to dispense with their submitting their papers to an officer of the Government previous to publication. The editors will, however, be held personally accountable for whatever they may publish in contravention of the rules now committed, or which may be otherwise at variance with the general principles of British law as established in this country, and will be proceeded against in such manner as the Governor General-in-Council may deem applicable to the nature of the offence, for any deviation from them.
>
> The editors are further required to lodge in the Chief Secretary's office one copy of every newspaper, periodical, or extra, published by them respectively.[2]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
2. *A History of Indian Journalism*, p. 18.

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The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of two dominating personalities on the scene of Indian journalism, James Silk Buckingham and Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Both of them were perceptive and responsible journalists though at the same time they were world apart in temperament and disposition. While Buckingham was vigorous, dominating and relentless, Raja Ram Mohun Roy possessed the virtues of humility, mildness and moderation. Both of them were dauntless so far as freedom of the Press was concerned; their services to Indian journalism cannot easily be forgotten. Buckingham entered the field of journalism with an open declaration as to what he considered to be the prime duty of an editor: it was "to admonish Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults and to tell disagreeable truths." In the absence of a proper legislative authority, the executive becomes irresponsible and so, he thought, journalistic criticism becomes highly necessary. The issue of Buckingham's *Calcutta Journal* is among the memorable events of 1818. It was a bi-weekly eight-page newspaper. It was free from financial problems owing to official patronage; and, for the same reason, could also afford to be bold in matters where others would have hesitated. A naval commander by training he had the courage to weather storms of all kinds. The very first issue of his newspaper created a stir in the journalistic world of Calcutta; appreciation for his editorial work was widespread. The success of Bukingham's venture posed a serious threat to other newspapers. A local contemporary, *Asiatic Mirror*, did its best to face the challenge but soon lost ground and was forced to cease publication. Buckingham's journalistic courage and boldness were the greatest source of the paper's strength and the main cause of its popularity. Within a short span of three years the bi-weekly became a daily. The circulation reached above a thousand by 1822. The annual income from the paper was £ 8000, and the total assets were valued at 40,000.

Buckingham was a great champion of the freedom of the Press and was greatly critical of the government's unlimited power. He relentlessly exposed corruption, nepotism and the tyranny of the powers that be. He reserved a whole column of the newspaper for airing of public grievances. He fearlessly

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attacked the government's action in giving a three year extention to Eliot, the Governor of Madras. The Governor protested to the central government with the result that the editor was reprimanded. The reprimand, however, had little effect on Buckingham. His next targets were the Chief Justice and the Lord Bishop. The administration was extremely sensitive so far as the Chief Justice was concerned. Buckingham was, therefore, threatened with extradition which too failed to have any effect on him.

Buckingham's persistent efforts were a constant source of irritation to the establishment. Three important members of the council were his sworn enemies but the Governor General, Lord Hastings, was favourably disposed towards him and helped him in all critical situations. John Adam, one of the Council members, was forced to file a libel suit against Buckingham which, though unsuccessful, cost the latter a sum of six hundred pounds. The Advocate General filed a suit against Buckingham in a criminal court with more or less the same result.

A little later, an anonymous letter appeared in *Calcutta Journal* which claimed that Company officials were in the habit of openly intimidating the natives in courts of law. When asked by the authorities to reveal the name of the anonymous correspondent, Buckingham referred to one Lt. Col. Robinson who was thereon ordered to leave the country within twenty-four hours. Adam did his best to use this opportunity to get similar orders issued against Buckingham also but failed in his effort. Buckingham's enemies, helpless because of Hastings' liberal attitude and the legal acumen of Justice Macnaghtan (who too did his best to protect Buckingham) now decided to pay him in his own coin by entering the field of journalism. They brought out a newspaper called *John Bull in the East* edited by Buckingham's old enemy James Bryce. However, Buckingham was victorious even in this encounter.

James Bryce contended in his paper that Lord Hastings was far from liberal in his attitude towards the Press. On the contrary, Bryce maintained, the Governor General had always been opposed to the idea of journalistic freedom. Buckingham contradicted Bryce and made a spirited defence of the Governor

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General's stand on this issue. He wrote that the Press Regulations formulated in 1818 had little legal sanction. This was enough provocation for John Adam who, along with other members of the Council, proposed to the Governor General to pass a law that would entail obtaining a license for the proprietors of printing presses. The government, according to the proposed legislation, would have the authority to cancel the licence whenever it thought it necessary. Hastings' liberal attitude, however, prevented the proposed law from being enacted.

This incident was soon followed by another. Dr. Jameson was appointed as the superintendent of the Medical School. Buckingham criticised the appointment as an example of nepotism and short-sightedness. He also pointed out that Dr. Jameson held three other important assignments, and that it was not therefore prudent to appoint such a busy person to a post of such responsibility. The comments naturally angered Dr. Jameson; Adam again proposed extradition, supported by the other Council members. Hastings, however, again vetoed the proposal tactfully.

As a fearless and bold journalist it fell to Buckingham's lot to get wounded,[1] to defend himself in courts of law and to suffer financial loss but he never lost courage. There is, however, little doubt that a great deal of Buckingham's forthright courage and fearlessness was also occasioned by Hastings' unstinted support and liberal outlook. Buckingham would have long been extradited without the Governor General's large-hearted and magnanimous patronage. What happened later proves the truth of this statement.

The end of Hastings' era brought the downfall of Buckingham. Adam was appointed as acting Governor General on 13 January 1823. One of the appointments he made was that of James Bryce as Stationery Clerk on an annual salary of £ 600. Buckingham criticised the appointment. Adam soon seized the opportunity, confiscated Buckingham's licence and ordered him to be extradited.

1. He was attacked and wounded by one Darwall in 1819 whom he had provoked by publishing a reconstructed speech in a religious controversy.

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Buckingham possessed unusual intelligence apart from extraordinary courage and forthrightness. His departure from India did not mean the end of *Calcutta Journal* which continued to be published under the editorship of Sandys. As the latter was of Indian origin he could not legally be extradited. *Calcutta Journal* continued to follow a bold and courageous policy. When the administration failed to do any thing against the editor (being of Indian origin), the axe fell on the assistant editor who was, for no fault of his own, expelled from the country.

John Adam had been a staunch opponent of the freedom of the Press though, during the Governor Generalship of Lord Hastings, he had remained helpless. Now, however, himself in authority as the acting Governor General he had full freedom to give vent to his repressed feelings by making an open attack on the freedom of the Press. As the Regulations of 1818 did not have any legal sanction he now issued an ordinance (18 December 1823) the main points of which could be summarised as follows:

1. No newspaper journal could be published without taking a licence from the Governor General-in-Council;
2. The application for issuing the licence was to contain the names of the proprietor, the editor and the publisher, and was also to give details about the newspaper office;
3. Any changes in the working staff of the newspaper were forthwith to be supplied to the Governor General-in-Council;
4. Licence could be withdrawn at any time;
5. Bringing out or selling a newspaper without due permission could result into a fine of upto Rs. 400.
6. Breach of the laws relating to the press could be sued in a court of law.

John Adam, the son of the Lord Commissioner of Scotland and endowed with an impressive personality, was an able organizer. Having risen from the ranks he was well aware of the inner working of the Company's administration. He was not satisfied with the curbs he had imposed on the Press; he

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now proposed to extend their scope by bringing in printing of all kinds within the scope of the Press laws:

1. Printing of books or newspapers without licence would entail a fine of Rs. 1000 and imprisonment for upto six months;
2. Magistrates would be authorised to confiscate unlicensed printing presses;
3. The obtaining of a licence was obligatory before starting a press. The licence could be withdrawn at any time without assigning a reason;
4. The name of the printer and the place of publication was to be entered on the first and last pages of a newspaper or book. A copy of the publication had to be deposited with the authorities.

The above-mentioned laws were almost like a bomb-shell in their effect on Indian journalism. The whole edifice was shaken to its foundation. Raja Ram Mohun Roy filed an appeal against them in the Supreme Court, and wrote:

1. This Ordinance would discourage those intelligent and loyal natives who were eager to disseminate among the common people a knowledge about the good aspects of British administration in India.
2. It would hamper the growth of knowledge in the country.
3. The natives would be deprived of an effective means of airing their grievances and making them known to the government. The administration, on the other hand, would remain ignorant of the real condition of the people.

He concluded by saying that God-fearing and honest rulers who possessed a knowledge of the weaknesses of human nature would always be conscious of the fact that the governance of a large country could occasionally lead to acts of gross injustice. Such rulers would, therefore, be eager to seize any opportunity and would be willing to use any means of knowing about the grievances of his subjects so that they could be redressed. This objective could be achieved only through the complete freedom

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of the Press.[1] The Supreme Court rejected the appeal with the comment that more personal liberty was enjoyed by the citizens of Calcutta then by those of any other city in the world. Raja Ram Mohun Roy was not discouraged by this judgment but, inspired as he was by patriotism and humanist ideals, submitted an appeal to the Sovereign in Great Britain. Every word of the appeal reflects the Raja's superb sense of history, depth of insight and forthrightness of expression. During the period of Muslim rule in India, he wrote in the petition, Hindus equally shared with Muslims all political rights and were given appointments to the highest administrative posts like the command of armies and the governorship of provinces. No one was denied rights and privileges only because his religion happened to be different from that of the Sovereign. Under the present dispensation such rights are not given to Indians. Freedom of the Press, however, went a long way to redeem the situation; the loss of this freedom has rendered Indians utterly helpless.

Mughal emperors, continued the Raja, however autocratic and arbitrary some of them might have been, would always seek to find out the trend of the public opinion in the provinces. It was their practice to appoint two news-writers or correspondents in all provincial capitals. One of them would chronicle events as they occurred while the other was asked to despatch regular secret reports of all the events. The Sovereign would not entirely trust the provincial governor even if the latter happened to be his own relative or friend. On the contrary, he would even go to the extent of dismissing the governor or his appointees on the basis of the reports from the correspondents. The petition ended with the prayer that the Press Ordinance be revoked and the Government of India be asked not to legislate laws that would curb the rights and privileges of the Indian people.[2] When the petition was rejected Raja Ram Mohun Roy, unlike Buckingham, finally surrendered and made no further attempts to champion the cause of the freedom of the Press. However, he closed down his own Persian newspaper, *Mirat-al-Akhbar*, in protest and pointed out that it was easy for the

1. *Sahafat*, p. 18.
2. *Sahafat*, pp. 68-69.

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people of European origin to obtain official permission (to bring out a newspaper) but for an Indian like himself it would amount to subjecting himself to the extreme humiliation and ordeal of court and police procedure. No self-respecting person would thus stoop to gain official favour. ("In the hope of gaining a favour from the Master, do not let the Gate-keeper buy away your hard-earned honour.") He conceded, though, that the humiliation of submitting an affidavit in the open session of the court could be avoided by appointing a substitute proprietor, but such a course of action would be not only immoral but also unlawful.

Even after undergoing the humiliation of submitting an application and affidavit, wrote Raja Ram Mohun Roy in the last issue of his paper, the Damocles' sword of official displeasure and the consequent withdrawal of licence would ever be hanging on the editor's head totally depriving him of any peace of mind. Man is always liable to err, and while speaking the Truth it is possible to say things that may not be palatable to the government. It would therefore be advisable to prefer silence to speech. As the Persian poet Hafiz has put it:

> Complain not, O Hafiz: a recluse beggar art thou—
> The Secrets of Statecraft are best known to Potentates.

The Raja concluded by offering his apologies to the Indian and Iranian subscribers of *Mirat-al-Akhbar* whom he was now unable to serve with news and comments.[1]

Calcutta Journal, the champion of the freedom of the press in Calcutta, deeply regretted the forced closure of *Mirat-al-Akhbar* and wrote that it had been a good portent for the two continents of Asia and Europe that some Indians had decided to make use of newspapers in order to bring enlightenment among their compatriots. Thus when newspapers were first issued in Persian, Bengali and other Indian languages our predecessor, Mr. Buckingham, a man dedicated to the cause of the spread of knowledge, added a translator to his staff entrusted with the task of rendering into English useful articles and news items from language papers. The *Calcutta Journal* still has in

1. Vide. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 183.

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its staff a man for the same purpose. The closure of *Mirat-al-Akhbar*, as reported above, has however belied the expectations we had from the native press.[1]

Mr. Fergusson, the proprietor of *Calcutta Journal*, also filed an appeal in the Supreme Court but it met with the same fate and was dismissed. Moreover, the learned judge, while explaining his stand, expressed his opinion that a free press was incompatible with the kind of government being run in this country. The two are self-contradictory. What was the result of extraditing Mr. Buckingham? Another gentleman stepped in as editor and contended that (not being a European) he could not be extradited. Should we not frame laws in order to cope with such a situation? I would again affirm, continued the judge, that the present government and freedom of the press can never go together.[2]

Francis Warden, the Chief Secretary of Bombay Presidency, member of the Council and Censor Officer, started two English newspapers, namely *Bombay Gazette* and *Bombay Courier*, from the city of Bombay. He was not only the proprietor but also the editor of both the newspapers though *Bombay Gazette* carried the name of Mr. Fair as its editor. This gentleman, however, was summarily extradited from the country when the newspaper under his editorship commented adversely on a Supreme Court judgement. The action roused the anger of Mr. Francis Warden who began severely to criticize the members of the Supreme Court. The Administration was for a while stupified by the harshness of the criticism, and was ultimately obliged to refer the matter to the Court of Directors. After some deliberations a new article was added to Adam's already existing Regulations prohibiting Company's servants having any connection either as proprietor or editor with any journal which was not devoted to literary or scientific subjects. The Company officials who failed to comply with the Order were threatened with immediate dismissal. Incidentally, the officially appointed Anglican clergyman also came within the purview of the Ordinance. Hence, Dr. Bryce, the editor of *John Bull*, made

1. Vide. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 183.
2. Vide. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

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an appeal against the Ordinance which was however rejected, and consequently, Dr. Bryce had to dispose of his newspaper.

Much of the force and severity of the Ordinance was reduced with the departure of John Adam from the country. However, men like Bayley, owing allegiance to Adam and staunch opponents of the freedom of the press, were still there. He attacked *The Scotsman* and *John Bull* during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Amherst. The latter, however, disliked it and wrote to him[1] that it was highly improper for the Administration to exercise too frequently its power with regard to newspapers and journals or to take them to task for minor lapses. He further wrote that the government policy was gradually to relax control over the press and to have curbs in consonance with general public interest. The government policy therefore has been, the Governor General continued, to ignore various minor lapses though, at the same time, serious offences have never been overlooked.

While Lord Amherst renewed the liberal Press policy, William Bentinck did his best to strengthen it. Though he was a great champion of the freedom of the Press, yet circumstances obliged him also to resort to imposing restrictions on it. It so happened that the war in Burma weakened the financial position of the Company. In order to cope with the situation the Administration was constrained to reduce the officers' allowances by half. The Calcutta newspapers severely criticized the move, and the concerned officers too appealed against this step. As the appeal was rejected it was feared that the newspapers would raise a hue and cry against the Administration. It was this situation that obliged Lord Bentinck to issue an Ordinance through the Chief Secretary prohibiting the Press from commenting on government policy relating to the issue of the officers' allowance.

On 6 February 1835 nine distinguished journalists of Calcutta (including three of Indian origin) presented a petition to Lord Bentinck containing in its earlier part an effective refutation of the arguments in favour of Adam's Regulations.

1. Vide. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, pp. 196-97.

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The petition made a fervent plea for the withdrawal of restrictions on newspapers in Calcutta as also on the language newspapers in the Bengal and Agra presidencies. It was argued that the said restrictions were not only pointless but also provocative. The petition suggested that Adam's Regulations should be forthwith repealed and a new, liberal code be formulated and publicized for general opinion. The other demands included the reduction of postal duty on newspapers and the withdrawal of the ban on public meetings in Calcutta that had been imposed through a government order in 1807. Lord Bentinck, however, did not remain long in office to be able to take action on the petition: he had to resign within a month of the submission of the petition on account of ill health. He was succeeded by Sir Charles Metcalfe as Governor General—a great supporter of the freedom of the press who had long been engaged in an official struggle for the repeal of the Press Ordinance. Consequently, under his administration all the previous regulations relating to the press were withdrawn and were replaced by a comprehensive Press Act that reduced the restrictions to the following:

1. Only a single declaration would be needed for bringing out a newspaper; any change of premises would necessitate a fresh declaration.
2. The printer and the publisher would be responsible for the entire matter printed in the newspaper.
3. Every issue of the newspaper would carry the name of the press, printer and publisher and the place of publication.
4. Failure to comply with these regulations would entail a fine not exceeding Rs. 5000/- and imprisonment not exceeding two years.

The new Press Act was greatly welcomed not only by journalists but by all sections of public opinion. Sir Charles Metcalfe, however, had to pay dearly for his support to the cause of freedom of the press; he was replaced by Lord Auckland as Governor General. Fortunately, however, the latter continued the policy of his predecessor thereby ushering in an era of great progress for the press in India.

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2

Urdu Newspapers from Bombay, Calcutta and Madras

A. CALCUTTA NEWSPAPERS

Jam-e-Jehan Numa, Calcutta

The great nineteenth century Urdu literateur and the fore-runner of modern literary research, Muhammad Husain Azad, claimed that his father Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was the pioneer of Urdu journalism, and that it was he who had brought out the first Urdu newspaper from Delhi in 1836. The claim was long accepted at its face value by students of literature, especially those of Urdu journalism. However, modern researches have clearly revealed that *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* was the first Urdu newspaper issued from Calcutta on 27 March 1822. It was brought out under the editorship of Munshi Sada Sukh Mirzapuri (who had earlier been associated with *Samachar Chandrika*) and was printed at Mission Press under the supervision of Harihar Dutt. It was a weekly newspaper comprising six pages of 11″ × 8″ size. The page consisted of two columns, and each column contained twenty-two lines. It carried the following print-line in Urdu: "Printed at Mission Press in Calcutta." While discussing the first date of issue of the newspaper, Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui has written:

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Official papers preserved in the National Archives show that the application for the issue of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* was moved on 28 March 1822. It was signed by Haridutt Bengu. We also learn from the same application that the name of its editor was Munshi Sada Sukh, and that its publisher was a Calcutta-based trading warehouse named William Pears Hopkins and Company.

Margarita Barns and others too have suggested the above-mentioned date as the likely one for the first issue of the paper. This, however, is not correct. The source of the error perhaps lies in an official report by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Bayley, (dated 17 October 1822) who, while compiling his report inadvertently entered the date of the application as the date of the first issue of the paper. It is obvious that some time should have elapsed between the date of application and that of the first issue of the paper. It is certain that the application was first moved on 28 March 1822. Hence, the same cannot be the date of the first issue. The early files of the newspaper are preserved in the National Archives, though, unfortunately, those pertaining to the first three years are missing. The earliest issue of the paper preserved in the Archives carries No. 133, dated 26 December 1824 (Wednesday). Calculating back from this it may be surmised that the first number of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* must have been issued in the first or second week of May 1822."[1]

W.B. Bayley, Margarita Barns and M. Aslam Siddiqui have all given 28 March 1822 as the date of the first issue of the paper. Maulana Imdad Sabri and Dr. A. Khurshid have, on the other hand, mentioned 27 March as the date of the first issue. The source in their case is *Calcutta Monthly Journal*. Dr. Khurshid points out that the files of *Calcutta Monthly Journal* (a monthly digest of *Calcutta Journal*) preserved in Punjab University Library (Lahore) contains a passage on p. 395 of Vol. 1 (1822) in which there occurs a quotation from its contemporary *John Bull* (issue of "the previous Friday"): The columnist in *John Bull* (as quoted in *Calcutta Monthly Journal*) points out that at the time of writing two Bengali newspapers

1. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, pp. 153-54.

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are being published from Calcutta under the supervision of native men of learning. One of these newspapers, so he learns, is a staunch "Whig" while the other is a Tory of Tories. He then points out that a new Indian language newspaper has started publication "this morning." Its antecedents and party affiliations are not known. The columnist further points out that the paper contains neither a prospectus nor the name of its printer. The paper is printed on three pages of the quarto size and its name is *Jam-e-Jahan Numa*. The first number, the columnist points out in conclusion, came out on Wednesday, the 27th of March (1822).[1]

This may indeed be taken to be conclusive contemporary evidence. Besides, the first extant issue of the paper (No. 133) bears the date 29 December 1824—which was a Wednesday. This must have decidedly been the periodic day of issue as the fact is also confirmed by the quotation from *John Bull* referred to above. Thus, on the basis of present evidence it would be advisable to accept 27 March 1822 as the date of the first issue of the paper. Accepting this date certainly requires an explanation as to a few missing issues between the date of the first issue and that of the first extant issue. The calculation is as follows: There would be 52 issues in 1824 (upto No. 133, dated 29 December 1824) and 53 in 1823. The remaining 28 issues would fall in 1822—which suggests that the first issue came out on 10 June 1822. This, however, is not correct. The *John Bull* reference is incontrovertible. Hence, a gap of several issues may reasonably be posited. That this certainly is the case amply borne out by the following quotation from Md. Atiq Siddiqui in which he refers to a statement in *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* (Persian) itself:

> "The first issue of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* in front of me begins with an untitled Apology. It tells us that the paper was not being regularly issued owing to some disorder in the printing press. It was also stated that the paper might not appear regularly in future also, and the readers were requested to bear with the management. Regular issue of the paper was promised after a couple of weeks."[2]

1. Vide. *Sahafat Hind-o-Pakistan Men*, pp. 25-26.
2. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, pp. 154-55.

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At first *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* was published in Urdu alone, and as the columnist in *John Bull* tells us, the names of the proprietor, editor and printer were not given. Even the serial number of the issue did not figure in the paper. It is believed that a column in Persian was started from the 8th issue (15 May 1822). This Persian column became so popular that the entire newspaper switched over to Persian, and Urdu was altogether abandoned. The Persian phase of the newspaper may therefore be said to begin on 26 May 1822. It was with this issue that a serial number was first given. The whole complexion of the problem now changes. While the paper itself began publication on 27 March 1822 (Wednesday), the serial enumeration was actually started with the first Persian issue (26 May 1822). Hence, it may correctly be surmised that only 3 issues of the paper failed to come out owing to printing house trouble.

This radical change in the language of the newspaper was commented upon by the paper's English contemporaries. Arguing about the unpopularity of Urdu as a journalistic medium, *Calcutta Journal* commented that, though a popular speech form, Urdu was seldom used for literary purposes. Moreover, Indians in general had little taste for newspapers. Persian, the *Journal* continued, was preferred to Hindustani (Urdu) by the educated elite who seemed to possess contempt for the vulgar tongue.[1]

The editorial comment in *Calcutta Journal* concluded with a useful advice to the natives. It suggested that a popular, easily understood, language could acquire general, country-wide currency only through the medium of the press. Achieving this objective would be an invaluable service to the nation. A time might come when the Indian elite would willingly give up their preference for Persian as a medium of expression just as the Norman conquerors in Britain finally abandoned their partiality for French in favour of the native tongue. The Indians would learn that the utility of a popular language was decidedly greater than that of the alien tongue, notwithstanding its sweetness and sophistication.[2]

1. Vide. *Indo-Iranica* (October, 1947), p. 18.
2. Vide. *Indo-Iranica* (October, 1947), p. 18.

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Munshi Sada Sukh Mirzapuri, the editor of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa*, switched back again to Urdu medium. This was, however, done not to satisfy the needs of the native reading public but in order to cater to the educational and official demands of European traders and men of learning. The mast-head carried a message from the editor to the reader informing him "respectfully" that with a view to making the newspaper more useful and interesting for the European segment of the reading public, it had been decided to bring out a supplement of the paper in Hindustani or Urdu language. The subscription for the paper would be four annas for a single issue or Re 1 for the whole month if it is bought along with the Persian part. The subscription for the Urdu supplement alone would be Rs. 2 per month.

The Urdu supplement of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* was quite distinct in its quality, arrangement and material and was certainly more than a mere supplement. Originally, it had consisted of six pages, but at the time of revival it was reduced to four pages. The Persian part comprised eight pages. Unlike *Mirat-al-Akhbar*, *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* did not have an editorial but contained news under various headings. Again, unlike *Mirat-al-Akhbar*, *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* whole-heartedly accepted the restrictions imposed by the Press Ordinance of April 1823. It went to the extent of printing panegyrics in favour of the Company's administration and adopted the Company crest on its mast-head. The paper's patrons included not only Calcutta's European population but also the Company's central and mofussil officers. Andrew Sterling, the Persian Secretary in the Company's government, made detailed comments on *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* in his report on the condition of Indian newspapers. He pointed out that this newspaper was in a bad condition so far as the quality of the paper and type-face was concerned. If the paper continued to be published, Sterling wrote, it was because of his own patronage and that of a few other European officers. The native population was not interested in reading newspapers, and the editor could not afford to depend on subscriptions.

Sterling continued in his report that though *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* was the best Indian newspaper yet even this paper did

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not publish original articles. Most of its material was either borrowed from the English-language newspapers of Calcutta or consisted of court notices and judgements. The Selection of news, however, was superb and reflected the taste and judgement of the editor. The borrowed and translated articles were generally taken from *Bengal Harkaru*. Criticism and comment were always in line with the policy laid down in the Press Ordinance.

Having pointed out that the paper's finances were in bad shape, Sterling expressed the fear that it might not long survive. The readership in the mofussils was least interested in the kind of material it published while Persian was little known and understood in the main city of Calcutta. The common man was not interested in news. Sterling feared that Indian subjects outside the Presidency would never be able to encourage native newspapers owing to their abject poverty.

Whatever Sterling wrote about the editing of *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* applied rather to the Persian than to the Urdu part of the paper. The Urdu version totally lacked official gazette and court judgements. On the other hand, it contained selected news, translated articles from English or Persian, and occasionally an Urdu *ghazal*. The news from Indian courts were borrowed from hand-written newspapers while the other news was translated from English newspapers. As European readers subscribed to the Urdu *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* with the view to improving their mastery of the language, special care was taken to keep its style and presentation as easy and comprehensible as possible. Abstract and unfamiliar words, complicated and abstruse compounds and obscure passages were generally avoided. This policy, however, could not be continued long. The European readership had access to English newspapers, so for them the news section was stale and repetitive. It was therefore decided to discontinue all news items from the issue of 1 March 1826. Instead, a serialised history of England was started, and this continued for about four months. It was followed by a similarly serialised history of Napoleon's campaigns. The history of Aurangzeb began with the issue of 17 June 1827 and continued upto 23 June 1828. The paper then unfortunately decided to cease publication owing mainly to lack of appreciation and patronage. The editor wrote:

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As most of our (European) patrons whose kindness helped us in bringing out this paper have little taste for Urdu and as our compatriots too have a greater liking for Persian, we have decided to stop publishing the Urdu Supplement. The Urdu pages would now be replaced by those in Persian. This change, we expect, would be appreciated by our subscribers and would earn greater fame and glory for our newspapers. Hitherto, we had published eight pages of Persian and four of Urdu. Henceforward all the twelve pages would be devoted to the Persian language. The subscription rate would continue to be the same as earlier, viz., Rs. 3.[1]

The death of Aurangzeb was followed by an endless series of political upheavals that were gradually leading towards the total disintegration of the empire of the Chughtai Mughals. The body politic had been thoroughly drained of all vitality. The governing classes were totally indifferent to their main task of ruling the country and were entirely indifferent to the welfare of the common people. The rulers had lost nerve to face the bitter realities of life that stared them in the face—political disintegration, economic crisis and stagnation. As the great Urdu poet Ghalib put it:

Many are the miseries of the world—
but wine is a cure for all of them
A slave am I of the Saqi of the River of Paradise—
What cause of worry do I have?

It is with regard to the social and economic conditions of the times that the contemporary newspapers are of great value. They contain a record of everyday life, and in this respect their role as chronicles of the times cannot be minimised. The political affairs relating to the reign of Akbar Shah II, the father of the last Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, are amply recorded in histories and chronicles but glimpses of his character and everyday life are to be found in contemporary newspapers. We have, for example, the following account given us in vivid contemporary prose in *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* (Urdu, 1 October, 1825):

1. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (Urdu), 1 October, 1825.

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News from Shahjehanabad

> Hazrat Jehan Panah (His Majesty) would arrive at the durgah of Qutub Sahib after attending the Festival of Flowers (Phool Walon Ki Sair). There His Majesty would listen to music and watch the spectacle of ladies bathing in the canal. The slave-girls would indulge in all kinds of pranks: they would hold each other in groups and thus together jump into the water. Some one would smile and squeeze water out of her hair while another would do the same to her *choli*. Someone would try to tear off the *Kurti* of a play-mate who would thereat blush with shame. One would shout, "Sister, do not enter the current; water flows powerfully there," and so on. Only those who have seen the playful pranks of such fairy-like creatures know what the spectacle looks like; words cannot describe it. One would hardly believe it to be true.[1]

The utter poverty of the populace was the ultimate source of the luxurious life of the ruling class, its pleasure-haunts and the abundance of slave-girls. The high-handedness, plundering and tyranny of the administrative class had ultimately converted rich and fertile land into barren and sterile territories. Unemployment was widespread, and the common people were experiencing the throes of a life and death struggle. In order to satisfy their hunger and earn a pittance they would even go to the extent of sacrificing their dear ones at the altar of the lust of the rich ruling class. Selling and buying of slavegirls was common, encouraged as it was by the lustfulness of the rich. Some indications of this state of affairs are to be found in the following extract from *Jam-e-Jahan Numa*:

> One day the City Chief of Police, Masita Beg, was ordered to bring into the Royal Presence all the slave-girls that were brought to the city for sale.[2] Information was brought that Ehsan Ali, a slave-girl trader, had brought four slave-girls besides the eight that he had earlier presented to Masita Beg. All of them were presented to be viewed. Orders came

1. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (Urdu), 1 October, 1925.
2. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (Urdu), 23 March, 1825.

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that they were to be sent back to Mirza Masita Beg. The slave-girls were therefore sent back to the Police Chief. Three of them were too young, so they were rejected.[1] (23 March 1825).

Trade in slave-girls had become a respectable profession leading to and arising from the wide-spread acceptance of the institution among the best, upper-class society in the country. Not only did the girls from the lower classes fall a victim to the tyranny of the system but even those from indigent, though respectable, middle class families could not occasionally escape the clutches of slave-girl traders. The tragic story of Umrao Jan Ada, the heroine of the classic Urdu novel, is a case in point illustrating the provenance of this pernicious evil.

A natural corollary of the institution of slave-girls was that of prostitution—though with a difference. The brothels and the houses of ill repute at Lucknow which had been, by a strange alchemy, precipitated by social dynamics, converted themselves into centres of the rich cultural life of the region. They were used as academies for the social training of young and talented members of the aristocracy. Prostitute had thus become a necessary link in the chain of social and cultural ascendancy converting in the process the marital life of the rich and well-to-do into a nightmare for the legitimately married wife or wives. The following brief extract would give some idea of the social mores of the times:

> When Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khan, the brother of Agha Nasir, left for Kanpur after quarrelling with his brother, his favourite prostitute, along with forty others, attended the *durgah* of Hazrat Abbas with *alams* (religious flags) in their hands and all dressed in vermillion-coloured clothes to express their sorrow and sympathy, and to pray, for the Mirza.[2]

Historical documentation in *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* relates mainly to the depiction of the moral degeneration and decay and the loss of human values in contemporary Indian society. Occasionally, however, it sought to provide its readers

1. *Ibid.*, 3 June, 1825.
2. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (Urdu), 23 March, 1825.

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glimpses, from secondary sources, no doubt, into the cultural and social life of Europe. The value of such documentation lies in the awareness it gives us of contemporary Indian attitude towards the culture of the alien ruling class:

> A French baker who had accompanied Napoleon on one of his campaigns in foreign lands disappeared and did not return to his wife and family for many years. His espouse waited for him for seven years and finally lost hope that he would ever return. She applied to the city ruler for permission to re-marry, which was granted. Now consider the irony of circumstances that only two weeks after her second marriage who should come but her first husband all hale and hearty and jubilant indeed to see his long-separated wife. The effect of the re-union on the wife, however, was totally different—as might verily be imagined. She was thoroughly ashamed and remorseful at her hasty decision. Her former husband consoled her by asking her to pray to God that the city ruler might permit him as well to marry another woman. Ultimately, the problem was partly resolved when the ruler did mercifully grant such permission to the unfortunate man. The story did, however, have a happier end for the original couple, when six years later, the second wife of the first husband died followed soon by the death of the second husband of the first wife. Thus came the opportunity for the original husband and wife to be re-united and to live happily ever after.[1]

Broad-mindedness, religious tolerance and a desire for national harmony have always characterised, with rare exceptions, the rulers of the Chughtai Mughal dynasty as well as, more generally, the Muslim aristocracy. These qualities were in evidence even in the period of decline. Non-Muslim subjects were absolutely free to celebrate their festivals, both social and religious, and to pursue their particular sectarian traditions without the slightest let or hindrance. The rulers and the nobles themselves participated in these celebrations with a view to promoting national harmony and a sense of security among the subjects. The following extract from *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* (dated 6 April 1825) illustrates the point:

1. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (Urdu), 3 June, 1828.

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News from Lucknow

A newsletter has revealed that during the days of the Holi festival trays of *gulal* and *abir* and pitchers of coloured powder were brought to His Majesty the Nawab of Oudh as presents from Hindu nobles and were rewarded with cash and *dushalas* from the Court. A variety of *sangas* were arranged in honour of Ishwari Das, the Nanak Shahi saint. *Bhands* or mimic performers from different cities were richly rewarded by His Majesty for their funny and strange performances; they came from far and near, and received cash and clothes beyond their expectations.

Moreover, soldiers of different platoons who presented songs and music at the door of the Royal Court were lavishly rewarded. Rewards in celebration of Holi were also distributed among all the platoons. Thus the citizens of Lucknow whole-heartedly enjoyed the festival of Holi owing to the generosity of their potentate. May God give long life to a ruler of such unheard of munificence.

It has to be noted that this generosity and large-heartedness on the part of the rulers, as also the nobility, was not confined to the festival of Holi alone but all other festivals were similarly made the occasion for the display of a like munificence thus winning the heart of the non-Muslim subjects. Encouragement was also given to the Muslim commonality to participate in Hindu festivals so that a spirit of communal amity might be engendered. Here is an account of how the festival of Dussehra was celebrated at Lucknow in an atmosphere of universal camaraderie and joy: the correspondent in *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (18 November 1825) writes:

News from Lucknow

Orders were given that *Ram Lila* should be staged the following day also. Therefore, a large number of dancing girls, *bhand* mimics, *nats*, professional Kashmiri mimics and eunuchs—all kinds of entertainers—gathered together in front of Mubarak Manzil, across the Gomti, in compliance with Court orders. The *Ram Lila* tamasha was inaugurated by Ishwari Das, the Nanak Shahi saint. His Royal Highness witnessed it for a long time. There was also a display of

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fireworks. Everyone was duly rewarded, and Ishwari Das was given a large amount to be distributed as charity.

Entertainments like the ones described above, with dancing-girls and professional mimics, were no doubt not much in evidence at the Royal Court in Delhi but generosities and charities, attendance at festivals and attempts to win over the hearts of all segments of the population were as much present here as at Lucknow. The following extract from *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (14 December 1825) describes how, on the occasion of Diwali, the royal palace and the fort were beautifully illuminated. Sultan Muazzam had a bath and dressed himself specially for the occasion, and gave awards to servants and retainers:

News from Shahjehanabad

His Majesty entered the *hamam* for his special Diwali bath on the back of a tortoise and with water from the Durgah of Chirag Delhi. After the bath he was dressed in gorgeous royal robes, gave rewards to his attendants and entered the palace. Thereafter he gave orders that, as it was Diwali, the gates of the palace and the fort should be thoroughly illuminated.

The scope of news coverage and comment in *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* was not confined to the courts at Lucknow or Delhi but extended upto the Punjab. The following extract (3 August 1825) throws light on the efficiency of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's administration and the zeal with which it tackled problems that affected the welfare of the common people:

News from Lahore

Maharaja Ranjit Singh asked Chait Singh, the Governor of Lahore fort why he had ordered the arrest of some *banias* (traders) in the city. It was explained to him that the latter had increased the price of grain and indulged in hoarding. This had led to a riot a few days earlier. Four persons were wounded. The Governor said that he made enquiries and found that the buyers were blameless. The poor had nothing to eat. The traders were responsible for the artificial scarcity which they had created out of greed.

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It was for this reason that a few *Chaudharies* had been arrested and were forced to sell grain at reasonable prices.

A severe drought destroyed the Kharif crop in 1825, and this led to an extreme shortage of grain. Food became scarce owing also to a lack of the means of transport and the poverty of the common people. Starvation become widespread. When the attention of the Shah of Oudh was drawn to the prevailing condition, he realized his responsibility and opened the doors of royal munificence. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (1 February 1826) writes: "His Royal Highness was informed that grain had become very scarce in the city of Lucknow. It was with great difficulty that wheat could be procured at the rate of thirteen seers per rupee and rice at that of twelve seers per rupee". The paper continues telling the story in the following words: "Charities are distributed among the needy and the poor every-day. Seasonal fruits from the city and suburban groves are regularly distributed among the royal servants".

The fact that the deposed rulers like Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh and Bahadur Shah Zafar of Delhi did not fail to inspire love and affection among their erstwhile subjects can be explained only in terms of the loving care they had taken when they ruled their respective states. The following extracts (*Jam-e-Jehan Numa*, 29 December 1924) throw some interesting side-light on the Nawab of Oudh's treatment of his personal servants, in this case the royal cooks:

News from Lucknow

A newsletter from Lucknow discloses that on Tuesday the 1st of the month of *Rabi-al-Thani* an appointment for *hazri* had been fixed with the Resident. His Royal Highness first went towards Karaili for a stroll and then returned to the palace. After a little waiting the Resident arrived. He was accompanied by eight other high-ranking English officials. His Royal Highness first ate *hazri* with these gentlemen and then had friendly conversation with them. At last the Resident left for his *Kothi* with a present of perfume etc. from the Nawab as is customary. Thereafter, it was time for lunch. A variety of dishes were served. The Nawab thought that the plain cooked rice was not of a quality that could

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be served on the royal table. Orders were given to Ghulam Husain Khan, the In-charge of the Royal Kitchens that two of the cooks, Lallo Modi and Chaman Lal Musharraf be forthwith arrested. The latter, however, expressed deep regrets and offered 5000 rupees as an acknowledgement of their folly and error. His Royal Highness owing to his gracious nature, completely forgave them.

The abolition of the inhuman practice of *sati* was the chief among the remarkable social reforms carried out by Lord William Bentinck.[1] Owing to this savage practice thousands of young and old innocent widows were burnt alive on the pyre every year along with the dead bodies of their espouses. As this social practice had strangely been incorporated into cherished and widely-held religious beliefs, the victims voluntarily offered themselves for the barbaric sacrifice. The willing acceptance of the martyr's fate, opposed though it was to all tenets of human reason, had yet elicited a word of appreciation from the great medieval Persian poet Amir Khusrau:

> No one is as dauntless in love as the Hindu woman:
> To burn itself alive on an extinguished flame
> is not given to every moth.

Muslim rulers of India had failed, inspite of their best endeavours, to stop the practice, and this inhuman form of social tyranny continued for centuries to take toll of innocent lives though within certain restraints. It was finally abolished in 1829. *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (29 December 1924) gives the following account of this social practice though the tone is unfortunately laudatory:

News about Sati

> News from Nepal suggests that Bhim Raj, the Chief administrator (*Mukhtar*) of the territory who had been sojourning in the vicinity of Palia died there. Both of his espouses embraced death on the pyre of their husband. What is more surprising is the fact that three of his slave-girls also embraced a similar fate voluntarily. Another strange news from

1. Bentinck assumed office as the Governor-General of India in 1828 and abolished the practice of *sati* the following year.

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Nepal is that a married woman who had entered into an adulterous relationship with another person and whose husband, coming to know of the illicit affair, had got her lover killed, was uncontrollably grief-stricken at the incident and rushed into the burning pyre of her lover and was consumed by the intense fire, which indeed may better be called the fire of love.

An extract from a later issue of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* (9 March, 1925) gives another account of *sati*:

A newsletter from Burhanpur (in Deccan) tells us of an old Brahmin who happened by chance to go one day into the forest and was attacked by a ferocious and hungry tiger. The poor Brahmin had little chance of escape, and so he was killed on the spot. As the news of the Brahmin's death reached his family, people from the village went to bring the dead body of the Brahmin from the forest. The 72 year old widow of the Brahmin, too old and weak to move her limb insisted on being burnt alive along with her dead husband. A huge crowd of the common people had gathered round the pyre to see the spectacle. It is said that as she sat on the unlit pyre she prophesied that that year things would be dear and diseases would spread.

A remarkable feature of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* was that it gave ample coverage to news relating to modern science and technology besides news of social, religious and cultural import. The style of presentation of such news was so simple, effective and readable that in the newspaper columns each new invention was made to look like a supernatural phenomenon. Besides, such news stories have the feel of impeccably artistic prose. Here is an extract (dated 28 December 1825):

Steamship

It had long been heard that a ship was being built in England which, in the manner of a small boat that some of us saw last year navigating in the river, would cross the high seas smoothly sailing without help from winds or currents. The builders of the ship in England have set the limit of seventy five days as the maximum period in which it would reach India from England. At last the hopes were

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realized and the new steamship reached Calcutta last week. There was a huge crowd of people along the shore to get a glimpse of this wonder. The common people were all the more surprised as they had all along been told by engineers that a steamship on such a big scale was a total impossibility and even if it could be built, it would never be able to reach India. The people were however wonder-stuck to see the construction and speed of the ship. The experts of the science of engineering were dumb with surprise and openly doubted if it was a steamship or a magical palace floating on water. They had no words of praise for the builders of the ship; it was a miracle, not the work of man. The people had willy-nilly to believe that it was no work of magic: the builder of the ship was present; people had actually seen the different stages of its construction. So, they had to believe their eyes. If such a ship had appeared in the past, people would have thought that angels had surely had a hand in its building. A whole volume would be needed to record the praise that was showered on the new steamship.

In the following paragraph, the newspaper explains the reason why the ship could not reach Calcutta within the stipulated period of seventy five days. Actually it took 106 days to complete the voyage. The reason, the columnist points out, was that the ship ran short of its stocks of coal on the way from England, and the places from where it had hoped to replenish its stock ran short of supply. The delay in completing the voyage was not caused by any manufacturing or engineering defects, so the newspaper informed its readers, and in future the voyage from England to India and back would not take more than five months.

Jam-e-Jehan Numa performed remarkable services in the development of the Urdu prose style. The columnists in this newspaper took special care to avoid difficult, abstract Persianised vocabulary and wrote in an easy, current and popular style. The complexity and depth of the subject-matter never leads the columnists of this paper into a corresponding obtuseness of style. The poetry that this newspaper published revealed a similar simplicity of diction. It was free from the

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common blemishes of contemporary Urdu poetry—far-fetched imagery, obscure thought and difficult metres.[1]

A radical change in the format of the newspaper brought about a corresponding change in its character. Originally a newspaper, it was forced by circumstances to convert itself into a learned periodical. After 1 March 1826, this journal reserved itself for the publication of translations, digests and articles of a historical character. In the first issue of the journal the Editor wrote:

> We are privileged to inform the public that accounts of the history of the Kingdom of England are easily available in the English language. Such histories have also been translated into Bengali. The Urdu-speaking world, however, does not have any access to such knowledge. We have therefore decided to present our readers with an abridged history of England down from the times of George the Third. It will appear in weekly instalments in our paper.

After a period of continuous publication for four months there was a change in the subject, and the editor informed the readers that the account of the history during the reign of George III from 1760 to 1802 had come to a conclusion in the previous week's issue and would thereafter be followed by the history of the Napoleonic wars (*Jam-e-Jehan Numa*, 28 June 1826). This historical account continued to be published in the paper till 10 June 1827, and was in turn followed by a serial account of the golden age of Aurangzeb which continued till the last issue of the paper (23 January 1828). The concluding comments on the reign of the last great Moghul Emperor are an excellent example of fair and objective historiography:

> Let the present writer point out that Aurangzeb was undoubtedly one the most capable rulers of the dynasty of Timur. He was well-versed in all the arts and sciences. The way he looked after the welfare of his subjects and his justice are unparalleled in the history of Mughal rule in

1. Vide an Urdu *ghazal* by an Anglo-Indian poet published in the issue of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa*, dated 18 April, 1827. Mr. De Costa, the poet, taught in a college and also wrote Persian verses.

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India though none of the great Moghuls no doubt was unmindful of his people's welfare. Shahjehan was a good ruler, and Jehangir's justice was proverbial. Emperor Akbar cannot be praised enough. All this is no doubt true but in all fairness, however, it may be pointed out that during the reigns of almost all of them advisors and wise counsellors had a say in the administration. Though the court of Aurangzeb too was full of many able men yet he never sought help from them in matters of administration. He managed the affairs of the state with such wisdom and foresight that seldom did he commit an error. There is no doubt that his behaviour in the early stages of his career was reprehensible but we must remember that ambition is universal and no one is free from the desire to acquire a kingdom. Princes in their ambition are likened to serpents, and the desire to ascend a throne knows no morality. The fact, however, remains that as soon as Aurangzeb was firmly secure on the throne he never again did anything wrong nor did he harm anyone unjustly or knowingly. That some call him miserly hardly needs a defence; is it wisdom to squander away royal treasury in luxury and indulgence?

Aurangzeb did not lead a life of princely luxury. He was generous in giving alms to the poor. The royal armies were amply rewarded and well looked after. He hated waste. The only charge that can be brought against him is that he was a little too partial in his religious leanings but love of religion has ever been counted among royal attributes. Everyone loves and has regard for his religion though a monarch, no doubt, has to look after the spiritual well-being of all his subjects without discrimination. On the whole, Aurangzeb had many virtues and few weaknesses. The only absolutely perfect Being is He Who created the Heavens and the Earth.

Aina-e-Sikandari, Bombay:

It was a Persian language newspaper issued from Bombay on 26 April 1832. It consisted of 12 pages of 12"×8" size and was a weekly issued every Thursday under the editorship of

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one Fazl-e-Haque and printed at Rames Press, Bombay. It continued to be an exclusively Persian language paper till the end of 1833 but since the beginning of 1834 an Urdu supplement was added to it of which the following issues are extant:

1. 2 April 1834/23 Zi-Qa'd 1249 A.H.
2. 24 April 1834/14 Zil-Hij 1249 A.H.
3. 26 June 1834/17 Safar 1250 A.H.
4. 22 July 1834/13 Rabi-al-Awwal 1250 A.H.

The title-page runs as follows:

Bombay No. 105. Dated 24 April 1834 A.D./14 Zil-Hij 1249 A.H. Thursday.

Aina-e-Sikandari Jam-e-Jehan Numa hai,
Mulkon ki kaifiat hai, aur turfa majra hai.

(This newspaper, *Aina-e-Sikandari* (the mirror of Alexander) is the Cup of Jamshed; Here you can get news of different lands and various conditions.)

This is followed by the table of contents in two columns. News from different cities and lands are given along with appropriate headings. Most of the news items begin with a verse. However, all the news from one city or country is printed together in a single sequence. In some issues the head-verses are different from the one given above, and from them we gather the information that this newspaper was semi-official and was issued under instructions from the Governor of Bombay. Another distinctive feature of this newspaper was that, contrary to others, it was printed in type and not lithographically. Some of the news-headings and the couplets following them (in English translation) are given below:

News from Spain

Nothing in this lowly, sublunary world lasts—
Except Good Deeds that are ever remembered.

News about the French Emperor and the African Sultan

This indeed is the way of the world:
One conquers and the other is vanquished!

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An interesting news item from Lucknow throws ample light on the princely justice, love of the subjects and humanity of Sultan Ghaziuddin Haider, the Sultan of Oudh:[1]

News from Lucknow

Royal orders were given to Raushan-al-Daula Bahadur that the *tabut* (effigy) that is annually taken to the Rauza of Hazrat Abbas on the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Ali Murtaza is always the occasion of conflict between two sects of Muslims. Arrangements should therefore be made that such hostile passions may not be roused by anything said or done by members of the either sect. These royal orders were effectively executed and thereby the cause of the conflict was forever removed.

The Sultan asked Raja Darshan Singh that the latter should always remain in royal attendance and should never withdraw himself from the Royal favour. (Thus did the Sultan win the heart of his nobles of different communities). The Raja prostrated himself before the Sultan on hearing this and was greatly pleased.

One day the Sultan went to Zeenat Bagh for a stroll thereby adding to its lustre by his royal presence. Suddenly a group of *dervishes* came within royal sight, and His Royal Highness asked the Raja forementioned who they were. The Raja informed His Royal Highness that these were true dervishes and saintly *fakirs*. Orders were given that immediately they be given Rs. 15000/- as a sign of royal pleasure.

Once it so happened that a quarrel on some past issue took place between the servants of Raja Darshan Singh and Mirza Raza Ali Beg. The quarrel led to a sword-fight among the servants. The Raja successfully pleaded the case of his servants before the Sultan and revealed that the other party was at fault. The Sultan, convinced, angrily commanded that a fine of two thousand rupees be forthwith exacted from the servants of the Mirza as they were the original culprits. Similarly, Bakhshi Mitter Chand supplicated that

1. Sultan Ghazi-ud-din Haider ascended the throne on 30 October, 1827 and died on 7 July, 1837.

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the platoon of Mirza Barq had not been paid salary for a long time. Orders were immediately given to Zafar-ud-Daulah that Thirty thousand rupees be taken from the Royal Treasury and sent to the *Bhakhshi's* headquarters (Kutchehry) for distribution.

An orderly, Munna Singh, submitted an application saying therein that one Bakhshi Lal Ji had accepted a bribe of two hundred rupees from one Ram Chander. Orders were immediately given to Raja Darshan Singh that such corrupt persons should be restrained from indulging in such malpractices and the amount of bribe be returned to the person from whom it was exacted.

Scarcity and plenty are necessary complements to each other but the duty of a ruler is to see that a balance is struck between the two in his or her domain. The following news-item from Sardahna shows to us how a wise ruler, in this case the Begum of Samru,[1] successfully managed to fight against high prices of grain in her domain that had resulted from the artificial scarcity created by unscrupulous grain-dealers of the territory.

One day the common people gathered together in front of the royal palace and submitted to the Begum that the "scarcity" of grain had ruined them while the same evil had led to the prosperity of the grain-dealers. The poor had now reached the depths of suffering and misery; even the rich had been brought to the brink of destitution. High prices of grain had affected all sections of society. The Begum paid immediate attention to their supplication, called forth two or three big grain dealers and admonished them saying that taking undue advantage of people's need was not proper. She enjoined them to sell wheat at the rate of twenty seers per rupee; otherwise they would be punished with imprisonment.

The grain dealers did not agree to obey the Begum's orders and refused to sell even at the rate of ten seers a rupee. They went away expressing their inability to comply with the orders. Instead of imprisoning the dealers as she had threatened she thought of a different strategy to bring

1. The Begum was a Muslim lady married to a rich Christian.

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them under control. She stationed soldiers on water tanks and reservoirs in order to prevent the grain dealers from drawing water and thus making use of public utility services. In this way did she compel them to sell grain at the stipulated price. They even promised to sell wheat at a cheaper rate the following year as they expected the new barley crop to be better then.

The newspaper took care to highlight the welfare activities of the Company government. It was not only the diplomatic and political sagacity of the British in India and their administrative acumen that impressed the native subjects but also the numerous public utility and welfare schemes that gradually won the heart of the common people. The following two news items from *Aina-e-Sikandari* bring this aspect of the Company's administration into focus:

News from Bombay

(The news item[1] begins with the following verses):

The span of human life is very brief; do some good:
Thy life is contemptible if thou fail in doing good.

(An English-language Bombay newspaper informs us) that the committee that had been appointed last year to look after beggars and other destitutes had made certain proposals. Some of these schemes had not then been implemented. (In this connection) a meeting of the distinguished citizens was held on Friday, the 9th of the month. This is followed by a list of names.

For a fews days past the Capital has been ravaged by the plague. As a measure of restraining its spread and controlling it the Governor-in-Council has established clinics all over the city in every locality. These clinics are staffed with country doctors and are well-stocked with medicines. That the people suffering from this disease are so well looked after shows how deeply the Company government cherishes the welfare of its subjects.

1. 26 June, 1834.

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Kashf-al-Akhbar Kashif-al-Asrar, Bombay:

The second Urdu newspaper to be published from Bombay was *Kashf-al-Akhbar Kashif-al-Asrar*. It was first issued in 1855. This brave venture in journalism was not the work of any one from the region of Bombay Presidency; on the contrary, the credit for this remarkable achievement goes to some one from the North—in fact, one Munshi Aman Ali from Lucknow. Garcin de Tassy, the great French orientalist, too, has referred to this newspaper:

> *Kashf-al-Akhbar* came out from Bombay in 1861. It is a weekly, published every Wednesday. It consists of eight pages in small print. It is edited by Munshi Aman Ali of Lucknow. Every number begins with a little verse that gives the complete contents of the issue.

The statement of De Tassy regarding the date of the first issue is not correct. The library of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (India) at Aligarh contains an incomplete file of the paper. The first issue in this file is numbered 14, volume 20, dated 9 April 1874. Calculations suggest that it must have been first issued in 1855. The statement of the author of *Akhtar Shahanshahi* also confirms the date:

Kashif-al-Asrar

> Issued in January 1855 by Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi from his premises at the *naka* of Muhalla Gogari in the neighbourhood of Hakim Dada Mian, cocaine merchant.

Kaifi, too, in his learned article has mentioned *Kashf-al-Akhbar* and given 1855 as the date of its first issue. He writes:

> 1. "*Kashf-al-Akhbar Kashif-al-Asrar*, Bombay. Date of first issue 1855. Editor: Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi."[1]

A supplementary title of this paper was *Kashif-al-Asrar*. It was published from Bombay under the supervision (editorship) of Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi, A remarkable feature of this newspaper was that it advertised itself on the front page in a

1. *Urdu*, April 1935, p. 198.

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full-length poem. A few couplets from the issue of 16 May 1861 may be cited:

After I had, in accordance with the Hadith,
Offered a hymn to God and panegyric on the Prophet,
My heart was greatly pleased, and then
I thought of praising (this) newspaper.
I should now reveal the title of this newspaper:
(It is) *Kash-al-Akhbar Kashif-al-Asrar*
(The expectation of News and the Discloser of Secrets).
This expectation I have from the wealthy:
That they will extend a helping hand.
A rupee and a quarter is the monthly subscription:
For the year (one has to pay) thirteen rupees and
a quarter in advance.
I get this paper printed every Wednesday;
And get it distributed every Thursday.

The original 42 couplets were reduced to four a few months later.[1]

Kaifi's statement that the printing of its own advertisement on the front page was a unique feature of *Kashf-al-Akhbar* not found in any other contemporary, is not borne out by facts. I have before me the 1 December 1856 issue of *Sehr-e-Samiri* from Lucknow. The first page of this newspaper too is full of a versified advertisement. What is worth-noting is the fact that these verses have been contributed by the famous nineteenth century Urdu poet Amir Minai.

Atiq Ahmad Siddiqui too has referred to *Kashf-al-Akhbar* in two places. It appears, however, that the learned scholar has fallen into error with regard to this newspaper as he seems to imagine that *Kashif-al-Asrar* was not the supplementary title of the *Kashf-al-Akhbar* but a separate newspaper. He has mentioned two different persons as the respective editors of what he imagines to be two different newspapers. He has even given two separate dates for the first issue of the "two" papers.

1. "*Kashf-al-Akhbar*, Bombay. Editor: Munshi Ghulam Husain. The date of first issue: 1854."[2]

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.
2. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 456.

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2. "*Kashif-al-Asrar*, Bombay. Editor: Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi. The date of first issue 1855."[1]

The real fact of the matter is that Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi was the father of Munshi Ghulam Husain. *Kashf-al-Akhbar* had in fact been first issued by Munshi Aman Ali. He continued to be its editor till the time of his death. Munshi Ghulam Husain took over the editorship after his father's demise and he in turn continued to discharge efficiently the duties of editorship till the time of his own death.

Kashf-al-Akhbar was printed on 8 pages of 13″×9″ size. The pages were generally divided into two columns and each column consisted of 23 lines of print. Since it was lithographically printed the calligraphy used to be excellent; the paper was French. On the left hand side of the mast-head the paper's registration number (46) was given, and the title was printed between the following two couplets:

The table is for the praise of gracious God;
This Remover of sorrow is the occasion
for furthering happiness.
Why should everyone not like it (this newspaper):
Khashf-al-Akhbar is loved by the whole world.

Below these couplets and the title of the newspaper were given the volume and issue nos and the title of the newspaper in English. The next line contained the following (in Urdu) with necessary alteration in each issue:

Volume 20, dated 21 Safar 1291/9 April 1874. Thursday.
Under the editorship of the lowly Munshi Aman Ali
Lakhnavi. Number 14.

The particular issue, details of which are given above, does not contain the versified advertisement as used to appear in the earlier issues; on the other hand, it contains the following prose advertisement:

This newspaper, *Kashif-al-Asrar*, all spring [the two phrases rhyme in Urdu. Internally rhymed prose was still popular, even in journalistic writings in Urdu in the middle of the

1. *Ibid.*, p. 457.

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nineteenth century.], is usually printed and published once a week. Latest news are published as far as possible. We print truthful news translated from English newspapers and news from other reliable sources. Rumours and news from unreliable sources do not find a place in our paper. It is not for us to indulge in the practice of defaming innocent people, nor do we print lampoons and personal satires. We will never restrain our pen from expressing the truth; we will publish only that which is correct and true. The rate of subscription for those within the City is Re. 1/- in advance. Advance annual subscription is Rs. 12/- and Rs. 15/- thereafter. Outside Bombay the subscription rate is: Advance Rs. 7/- inclusive of postage for six months; thereafter Rs. 10/-. The well-to-do patrons may be charged Rs. 24/- annually. If they pay in advance the subscription would be Rs. 13/- and a quarter. Advance payment must in all cases accompany the application for opening a subscription.

The second column gave local Bombay news under the heading "*Kashf-al-Akhbar*, Bombay". The print-line on the last page ran as follows: "(At) the house of Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi, editor, *Kashf-al-Akhbar*, on the *naka* of Muhalla Gogari, Bombay".

So far as the trend of news in *Kashf-al-Akhbar* (in its early, pre-1857, days) is concerned, the later, extant, issues of the paper are of little value. Some idea of the news printed in the early years of *Kash-al-Akhbar* can, however, be had from its contemporary *Sehr-e-Samiri* from Lucknow. The following news-item in *Sehr-e-Samiri* is borrowed (with acknowledgements) from *Kashf-al-Akhbar*:

London

The wisdom (in the following) is from the pen of *Kashf-ul-Akhbar*;

The style too is that of the editor of *Kashf-ul-Akhbar*. The editor of *Bombay Gazette* has received a news from London that has gladdened the hearts of those impatiently waiting for it. The news is that Nawab Jafar Ali Khan, the ruler of Surat who had been sojourning in London for many years and had been engaged in litigation with the

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Court of Directors has now been freed from his daily attendance at the court and from legal worries since the Court has now decided the case in his favour. The Nawab and his daughters are to get one lakh rupees annually for life. No reductions in the amount shall ever be made in future, and all the expenses incurred by the Nawab in connection with the litigation will be compensated for by the Government in the form of a lump sum of Rs. 2 Lakhs. The affairs of the late former Nawab relating to his descendants were also entrusted to the present Nawab to tackle them as he pleased, with the stipulation that he be fair and just to them. (Those who had similarly been pleading the case of the state of Oudh in the Court of Directors) were greatly impressed to see the legal ability and acumen of (the Nawab of Surat). They made consultations among themselves, and as a result, along with distinguished and learned Englishmen he too has been asked to give his advice in pursuing the case of the state of Oudh in the Court of Directors. There is every reason to believe that the case would have easy success in the end, yet it is believed that the persuasive art of the Nawab would bring success hearer.

(*from Sehr-e-Samiri*, dated 19 January, 1857)

The news item, quoted in *Sehr-e-Samiri* from *Kashf-al-Akhbar* and given above shows that Munshi Aman Ali Lakhnavi, like the other Lucknow journalists, was favourably disposed towards Sultan Wajid Ali Shah and other rulers of native states, and could not tolerate injustice against them. Like most Indians, the editor of *Kashf-al-Akhbar* too wished that the seat of Oudh be restored to the Sultan inspite of his many short-comings and incompetence as ruler. In this respect, it may be pointed out that Lucknow-based journalists or journalists coming from Lucknow (like the editor of *Kashf-al-Akhbar*) were very different from those hailing from the Punjab: the former were very sympathetic towards native rulers and never lost an opportunity to plead their case.

The following extract, on the other hand, shows the native journalist in a different light. However much he might have sympathised with the native rulers in their dealings with the

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Company government, when it came to an affair in which the same Company government was involved with a foreign power the journalist's sympathies unmistakably lay with the former rather than the latter:

Qandhar

The news is widespread in all the neighbourhood; everyone is talking about the same. It is this: that four Englishmen, including one general and two commissioned officers have been staying at the Amir of Qandhar's residence. These Englishmen are persons of great intelligence and resourcefulness. They intend going to nearby Qandhar from the Amir's residence. It is also rumoured that after they have reached Qandhar a certain treasure would also be despatched there through the Bolan pass, and that too without delay.

A friend who is employed in the British army tells me and the news is fresh—that the British government, at the time of despatch of forces on the Persian expedition, had persuaded the army officers to sign a certain agreement. What foresight, indeed! It was done so with the view of strengthening the resolve of the officers to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the expedition without a thought as to what would happen to their families behind them. The government has agreed to pay Rs. 5/- per month for the maintenance of the soldiers' families in their absence. May God be praised! With what intelligence has the Government tried to win the hearts of its soldiers! This generosity has made it certain that the soldiers would fight wholeheartedly even at the risk of their lives. They would bravely step forward on the field of battle. How true is the saying: "men only boast; it is money that works!"

(from *Sehr-e-Samiri*, Lucknow, 11 May 1857)

Here is another extract revealing the early native journalist's interest in, and knowledge of, European affairs:

Russia

The news is going the rounds—everyone is talking about the same—in the foreign lands of London (Britain) and

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France that in the month of April His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, is going to visit Paris, the French capital, in order personally to meet the King (Emperor) of France. God only knows what important confabulations are going to take place between them. The Emperor's visit is going to coincide with that of the Grand Duke Constantire also. The latter aims at winning goodwill to the best of his ability through intelligent negotiations. On hearing the news of their arrival the Emperor of France is busy making grand arrangements for the royal council. It is well-known what preparations are afoot to welcome the royal visitors!

(from *Sehr-e-Samiri*, Lucknow, 6 April 1857)

That the present-day descendants of the editors of *Sehr-e-Samiri* and *Kashf-al-Akhbar*, the "western" correspondents of our various national dailies and the editorial commentators on international affairs are only just a shade better need hardly be pointed out.

Madras Newspapers

Inspite of the great achievements in the field of research in modern times, the history of early Urdu journalism is still shrouded in the mist of ignorance and lack of true knowledge. Whatever little facts have been brought into light by sporadic forays into the past are still subject to doubt. There is a vast field open to the searchlight of research and many facts have yet to pass through the scrutiny of investigating eyes.

Under the present conditions while most of the early Urdu newspapers are buried in little-known libraries, it is difficult to say which particular theory or fact might ultimately be found to be erroneous. In view of this uncertainty it is difficult to make any claim about the chronological order of precedence about early newspapers. Similarly one hesitates in giving to any particular paper the honour of being the first being issued from a certain place or region.

For a long time after the publication of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* from Calcutta, the existence or circulation of Urdu newspapers from anywhere is subject to doubt, and for many years after this pioneering venture the history of Urdu journalism remains a blank. However, soon after the recognition of Urdu as the

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official language of the land the issue of *Urdu Akhbar* from Delhi, a number of Urdu newspapers came to be published from many different cities and regions of the country, and the existence and circulation of these newspapers can be proved with reference to written and official documents.

Recent researches have also brought into light another important aspect of the history of Urdu journalism: Urdu newspapers were not confined only to the old, traditional centres of the Urdu language—places like Delhi, Lucknow and Agra—but were also issued from many other remote cities and areas. If on the one hand, Urdu newspapers were published from places like Peshawar, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar and Sialkot in the north and north-west, then, on the other, they were also published from places as far south as Madras. An account of newspapers published from Madras is an indispensable part of the history of early Urdu journalism.

Many years ago late Dr. Abdul Haq, published a useful and detailed account of "Urdu Newspapers from Madras in the Nineteenth Century" in the April 1941 issue of *Urdu*. This paper is certainly a reliable guide to the early history of journalism in Madras. While talking about the earliest Madras-based Urdu newspapers, Dr Abdul Haq has mentioned '*Azam-al-Akhbar* as the first to be published from there. He writes:

> From whatever information we have till now about Urdu newspapers it is apparent that the first Urdu newspaper was brought out from Delhi under the editorship of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, the father of Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad, in 1836. This assertion has been disproved by research. Twelve years after this, Urdu newspapers came to be published from Madras. The first newspaper to have been issued from Madras, and to which I have access, was started in 1848. Perhaps its first issue was brought out in the month of Muharram 1265 A.H. and this probably is the first newspaper to be issued from Madras. Its front-page often carried announcements by *Fort St. George Gazette*. The title of the newspaper was printed in a long sentence with a rather stupid kind of internal jingling rhyming which cannot be revealed in English translation:

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> "'*Azam-al-Akhbar*; Thursday, the day of issue; price Re. 1/- per month; advance—Rs. 10/- once a year; postage to be paid by the subscriber."

Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui, the author of *Hindustani Akhbar Naveesi* (in Urdu), too, following the authority of Dr Abdul Haq and Mr Sajan Lal, has accorded to '*Azam-al-Akhbar* the distinction of being the first Urdu newspaper from Madras. He has written about the paper in the following words:

> '*Azam-al-Akhbar* was the first newspaper to be issued from Madras in Muharram 1265 A.H./ 1848 A.D. It was named after the poetic pseudonym of Nawab Muhammed Ghaus Khan 'Azam of Karnatak. This connection was revealed by the fact that the official seal of the Nawab was printed on the front-page of the paper as its monogram, and also indicated in the following two couplets:
>
> Why should not Authority be kind to the Supplicants?
> Why should we not require its gracious glance?
>
> May *Ism-e-'Azam*[1] be repeated in the 'Azam Press!
> After which let this newspaper be called "'Azam-al-Akhbar"—the great news-paper!

The authority with which Mr. Atiq Siddiqui has claimed '*Azam-al-Akhbar* to be the first Madras-based paper is rather doubtful. He has based his categorical claim on the suggestion only tentatively put forth by Dr. Abdul Haq who had, in the true spirit of cautious and honest research, written: "The first newspaper from Madras which I have been able to discover was first issued in 1848." And then, "Perhaps its first number came out in Muharram 1265 A.H., and this is the oldest weekly newspaper from Madras." The suggestion here clearly is that '*Azam-al-Akhbar* is the oldest among all Madras-based papers to which the author had access. Mr. Atiq Siddiqui, on the other hand, not only came to a firm conclusion about '*Azam-al-Akhbar* being the first newspaper from Madras but thought it proper to remove even the "perhaps" from Dr. Abdul Haq's

1. "Ism-e-'Azam" is a famous magical-mystical formula. It also means, literally, "The name of (Nawab) 'Azam". There is a pun on the phrase.

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statement as to the date of its first issue! Incidentally, in his statement, even the real name of the Nawab of Karnatak (Nawab *Ghulam* Ghaus Khan Bahadur 'Azam) was metamorphosed into "Nawab *Muhammad* Ghaus Khan 'Azam."

Jame'-al-Akhbar, Madras

It is still uncertain as to which the first newspaper to come out from Madras was after official-language status had been accorded to Urdu and the issue of *Urdu Akhbar* from Delhi. Recently, however, research has discovered another Madras-based newspaper which was issued by Syed Rahmatullah in 1842. It was called *Jame'-al-Akhbar*. It was a weekly consisting of average sized sixteen pages. The paper was of French-make: The calligraphy was nice, and the pages were divided into two columns. The following outline of the front page may be found interesting:

No. 1 "Jame'-al-Akhbar" Volume 3

Once in a week. Published every Monday. Advance Price Re. 1/- monthly

10 Zil-Hij Friday 1259 A.H.	1 January 1844 A.D.

Summery of the Orders of the Government of Madras	News

In its comprehensiveness and orderliness, *Jame'-al-Akhbar*, looks better than its contemporaries. It was modelled on the English newspapers of the day. Even in the absence of effective means of transport and communication, it managed to publish everyweek authentic and reliable news from distant parts of the country. It published in the first column of the front page news concerning the Company government at Madras under the title "Summary of the Orders of the government of Madras." Selected news from other cities and places, as also news from other countries, were printed in an orderly manner and under appropriate headings. Occasionally, the paper also published news or short essays about the geography, population, production, dress, instruments of punishment and religion of a

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particular country. An interesting fact about the style and language of the newspaper was that instead of the standard and idiomatic Urdu, it consisted of the peculiar Madras idiom and contained phrases and ways of construction unknown to the northern, standardised Urdu. Occasionally, there appeared in it attempts to imitate the Lucknow style, while, on other occasions, its prose succeeded in achieving an easy flow and graceful simplicity.

Jame'-al-Akhbar presented a true and interesting image of its age. It contains vivid and living images of utter helplessness, indifference and maladministration of the rulers of native states and kings of Delhi and Oudh. Occasionally, it also expresses a certain disenchantment with the Company's government.

News from the Mughal Capital Delhi

> The powerlessness and incompetence of the Emperor of Delhi has increased so much that now it is impossible for him to manage even the affairs of his own palace. Ghulam Ali Khan Mukhtar beat up a royal soldier, and the Emperor could not do anything except feel hurt and sorry. Nawab Mirza Ali has been removed from the charge of Kotwali and put behind the bars. He is indisposed. A few days later his affairs would be looked into. Incidentally, the winds in Delhi blow from the east.
>
> (*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No. 14, Vol. 3, 1 April 1844)

Going through the files of *Jame'-al-Akhbar* we learn about the existence of another Urdu newspaper. It was entitled *Sa'id-al-Akhbar* and published from Delhi under the editorship of Munshi Nuruddin. It was a weekly, printed lithographically.

News from Delhi

> Munshi Nuruddin is an old *ilaqa dar* of the Company and is a pensioner now. He publishes lithographically a weekly newspaper in Urdu which is known as *Sa'id-al-Akhbar*.
>
> (*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, 15 April 1844)

The following news-item from Lucknow gives a vivid picture of the political instability, the mutual rivalries among the nobles, the tyranny and meanness of the administrators and the self-indulgence and indifference of the Sultan of Oudh:

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News from Lucknow

The high and mighty Sultan has dismissed Imdad Husain Khan Saheb from service and has, in his place, appointed Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan Saheb. This gentleman is the nephew of Hakim Mehdi Saheb. There is no doubt that the present incumbent is more God-fearing than Imdad Husain Khan Saheb. It is believed that administration would greatly improve under him. Till Ahmad Ali Khan Saheb takes over charge of his new responsibility, the administration will be looked after by Inayat Ali Khan Saheb. The ruler of Nepal had raised a small army with a view to punish some rajah. The high and mighty Sultan of Oudh (mistakenly) thought that the ruler of Nepal intended to attack his Sultanate. There is no substance in the news.

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, Vol. 3, 1 January 1844)

[The following news-item is written in an internally rhyming prose]. The condition of Lucknow is indescribable, the ruffians are in ascendency and the subjects unhappy; the tyranny of officers cannot be described in words while the just Sultan is busy in his palace; the Prime Minister Ahmad Ali Khan is rubbing his hands with regret and the vast multitude is full of complaints; the Resident Bahadur is keeping his mouth shut.

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No. 26, Vol. 3, 24 June 1844)

News from Lucknow

Munir-ud-Daulah has assumed the ministerial charge. Since then the administration is being normally carried on. He posted soldiers at strategic points in the city during the days of Muharram in order to prevent any conflict between the Shi'a and Sunni communities. Owing to this arrangement the days of Muharram passed off peacefully in the city of Lucknow but no such police arrangements have so far been made in the *parganas* around. A soldier of the Pink Platoon wounded a worker of the postal services. It is heard that in the royal court at Lucknow no information can be obtained without giving a bribe. Muniruddin is a man of greater integrity than earlier ministers. A common form of punishment

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he inflicts on a culprit is to make him sit on a donkey with his face towards the tail of the animal and thus drive him out of the city accompanied by the beating of drums. Notwithstanding this severe punishment, vice and crime persist.

A side-light on the popular attitude towards the West is thrown by an interesting news-item in *Jame'-al-Akhbar* which tells us how suspicious the common people were of the western medical system; they thought that western medicines would pollute them as they contained drugs forbidden by their religion. Indians, particularly in the south, preferred to die rather than get treated by English doctors:

News from Nilgiri

The climate there is not good, and often the people of this region suffer from fever (malaria?). The people there are so stupid that instead of turning to British physicians they rather prefer to die of this disease. (Another news from Nilgiri is) that there the magnificent house of a British lord is going to be put on sale. The temperature there these days is 57°.

(No. 35, Vol. 3, 26 August 1844)

In the 1 April 1844 issue of *Jame'-al-Akhbar* a very illuminating and thought-provoking news was published highlighting the emergence of nationalist feeling and bringing into focus the growing discontent against the Company government. It was entitled "News about a mock-fight among the children of Gwalior with guns and cannons." Since it is an interesting item it is quoted below in full in spite of its inordinate length.

It is said that on 27 February 1844 some 375 young boys, ranging in age from 10 to 15 years, gathered together in a field in Gwalior. They brought with them small cannons and also collected swords, pieces of wood and stones. Thereafter they divided themselves into two "armies:" one was supposed to represent the Marhattas, the other, the British. They selected a young girl of seven and named her Tarabai, and another was called Rakha—she belonged to "Kumhar" caste. Similarly, a number of other boys were made to

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impersonate various known British and Maratha officers, and thus did they "raise" two armies, ranged one against the other. Having assigned various "ranks" in the two "armies," they brought bags of cowries, and distributed them among the "officers" according to rank. Tara Bai was made to stand in the middle; the Maratha army was organised to her left and right. And then the "attack" on British army began—with guns and cannons. Many of the children were "killed" and "wounded."

The news was brought to the knowledge of the real Tara Bai and the British officers. All of them were greatly surprised to learn all this, and did their best to prevent the children from indulging in this mock-fight. The next day, however, six hundred children again gathered together on the "battlefield" and started the fight. The British and Marhatta soldiers ran to the field in order to stop the children but were helpless as the children were armed with real guns and cannons.

After this, the children took two young boys from among themselves and made them to impersonate two well-known Maratha officers. Thereafter, they "beat them up" calling them traitors to the Maratha nation. Then they staged another mock event. They "hit" the boy who impersonated Colonel Iskander with an arrow thus "wounding" him. They did some first-aid, and thereafter asked him if he would fight again. The latter replied that he would fight the British with his last drop of blood. In the evening all the children went back to their homes. They were then surrounded in their homes. The British officers and Maratha nobles admonished the parents of these children and asked them to prevent the children from indulging in such activities again. It is said that more than three hundred children were actually wounded in these "battles."

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No. 14, Vol. 3, 1 April 1844)

Jame'-al-Akhbar occasionally carried advertisements of newly published books. The 18 March 1844 issue of the newspaper carries an advertisement of the Urdu translation of the famous classic, *Hadaeq-al-Balaghat* by Maulana Imam Bakhsh Sahbai:

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Advertisement

Hadaeq-al-Balaghat, the famous treatise by Maulana Imam Bakhsh Sahbai, has very well been translated into Urdu. Copies of it have been received in Calcutta by the correspondent of *Sultan-al-Akhbar*. Any one interested may write to him.

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No. 12, Vol. 3, 18 March 1844)

Earlier it had been pointed out that *Jame'-al-Akhbar* was noted for its comprehensiveness and the authenticity of its news. This is verified by the following:

Editor's Reply to a Correspondent

Your letter of 24 Rajab/10 August reached me through the post...If any one writes a letter to us in this manner, that is, either by concealing his name or writing under a pseudonym, we do not publish such letters. We do not accept letters from strangers unless on good authority. So, any one wishing to get his letter published in *Jame'-al-Akhbar* should clearly and truthfully state his name.

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No 34, Vol. 3, 16 August 1844)

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century the propaganda campaign against smoking had started in the Indian press. In the 1st April 1844 issue of *Jame'-al-Akhbar* there appeared an interesting news regarding the bad effect of smoking:

News about the Opinion of Dr Henry Saheb

This physician writes that Englishmen, Portugese, and Frenchmen etc. in India have started smoking *hookas*, cigarettes and cigars during their stay in India. This bad habit shortens life. This habit also removes certain good substances from the body. Tobacco smoke badly affects the heart and the liver. The bad smell of tobacco gives a bad odour to perspiration. There are hardly any good points about the habit; the harms are many. The brain, nerves and digestion are badly damaged by this habit.

(*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No. 14, Vol. 3, 1 April 1844)

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Among news about foreign lands, the following about U.S.A. is interesting:

News about the New World

> News from that country tells us that this time the Missouri and Mississipi rivers were so much flooded that transport was totally disrupted for many days. The waters of these rivers rose so high that they destroyed many townships and flooded the fields for many miles around...
>
> (*Jame'-al-Akhbar*, No 36, Vol. 3, 23 September 1844)

The following contemporary newspapers are referred to in the different issues of *Jame'-al-Akhbar*: *Agra Akhbar*, *Bengal Harkara*, *Khairkhwah Hind*, *Gentlemen's Gazette*, *United Service Gazette*, *Englishman*, *Times*, *Chronicle*, *Sa'id-al-Akhbar*, *Sultan-al-Akhbar*, etc. The following announcement was made in the 20 December 1844 (No. 53, Vol. 3) issue of the paper:

Notice

> Advertisers in *Jame'-al-Akhbar* are informed that the current year is going to end in a few days. Those who have yet to clear their dues may kindly do so, and others may make advance payments for the next year.

The print-line of the newspaper carried the following information: "Proprietor and editor: Syed Rahmatullah, Printer: Bismillah Beg."

Jame'-al-Akhbar continued to be published even through and after the eventful days of 1857. The information given by the great French orientalist, Garcin de Tassy, also confirms this.

Akhbar Aftab-e-Alamtab, Madras

Dr. Moulvi Abdul Haq Saheb of Madras has referred to this newspaper in the following words:

> Besides '*Azam-al-Akhbar*, another Urdu newspaper published from Madras in 1849 was *Aftab-e-Alamtab*. News from this newspaper were quoted in *Fawaid-in-Nazirin* (Delhi) edited by the famous mathematician Master Ram Chander.

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In No. 80 of *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Agra, the following news is quoted from *Aftab-e-Alamtab*, though not directly but from *Al-Haqaiq*, Agra:

Ahmadabad

> The newspaper *Aftab-e-Alamtab* writes that a *mahajan* (merchant) tried to establish a school for the education of Hindu boys. When the news of his efforts reached the District Collector, he was greatly pleased with it and praised the *mahajan* very highly. He publicly conferred on the latter the title of Rao Bahadur."

Akhbar Subh-e-Sadiq, Madras

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has written the following about this newspaper:

"**Subh-e-Sadiq**"

> Published from Madras adjacent to Masjid wala Jahi; Properitor: Shah Muhammad Sadiq Sharif Chisti; Editor: Jafar Husain Hanif Chishti; Printer: Ghulam Muhi-ud-din Hanif; First issued in 1859.

However, this statement is not correct. It might have closed down during the Mutiny but it did certainly exist in 1856 as the 5 January 1857 issue of *Sehr-e-Samiri* (Lucknow) contains a news item quoted from *Subh-e-Sadiq*, Madras. Apart from this there are a number of other items in various issues of *Sehr-e-Samiri* quoted from the same source. The following items are given as examples:

Karnatak

> The *Subh-e-Sadiq* of Madras directly gives the news that on 27 October the native state of Karnatak was confiscated by the British government and brought under its rule. It was made possible by the diabolic machinations of the disloyal *diwan* of the state.
>
> (*Sehr-e-Samiri*, 5 January 1857)

> The *Subh-e-Sadiq* of Madras, quoting the *Register* of London, gives the following interesting information (about the rate of increase in London's population): 1081 people

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died in London in a week; 1788 female children were born bringing spring into the garden of life. This should give us some estimate of the increase in population in the country as a whole.

The same journal writes, and the news should gladden the heart of the readers, that recently the marriage of a prince in the royal family was celebrated on a grand scale. Gifts were bestowed on the general public. A dowry of about 70 to 80 lakhs was given. Everywhere there was merriment and jubilation.

(*Sehr-e-Samiri*, 19 January 1857)

There are news items in *Sehr-e-Samiri*, dated 27 April 1857, quoted from *Subh-e-Sadiq*, Madras, proving that the latter existed at least till that date; that it continued to be published long after the great upheaval of 1857 has already been stated.

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3

Delhi Newspapers

The first Issue of 'Delhi Urdu Akhbar'

When exactly the Delhi *Urdu Akhbar* was first issued is doubtful and a subject of controversy. Qasim Ali Sajan Lal thinks it was first issued in 1836 but Margarita Barns believes it began publication in 1838. The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* says it was first issued on 1 March 1851. In the opinion of Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui it started publication in 1837.[1] Mr. Siddiqui's opinion is based on the following argument: the January 1840-December 1841 issues of *Urdu Akhbar* are preserved in the National Archives. The first of these issues has the following number: "No. 153, 22 January 1840, Sunday, volume 3." Calculating on the basis of this information, Mr. Siddiqui believes the first issue must have been published in January 1837.

Mr Siddiqui's calculation, however, is erroneous. On the basis of regular weekly publication, the possible date of the first issue should be reckoned to be 23 February 1837. Mr. Siddiqui has given details of some other issues also:

No. 15, Vol. 19	12 April 1857
No. 19, Vol. 19	10 May 1857
No. 20, Vol. 19	17 May 1857

1. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 266.

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No. 21, Vol. 19	24 May 1857
No. 24, Vol. 19	14 June 1857
No. 38, Vol. 19	13 September 1857
	(Changed to *Akhbar-al-Zafar*)

The study of these facts brings some surprises in its wake reducing the problem of the date of the first issue to a puzzle. Calculating back from No. 15, Vol. 19 we come to the conclusion that No. 1 of the same volume must have been published on 4 January 1857, and calculating further back from that we may regard 1838 as the year of the first issue. The contention that 1838 was indeed such a date would have been indisputable, had the issues (1840-41) preserved in the National Archives not been extant.

It is reasonable to believe, though not independently corroborated, that *Urdu Akhbar* had ceased publication for two years at some stage. Official reports, however, suggest that it was being published in 1844. Even its circulation had increased from 69 copies to 79. Official reports also give us the following information: it was jointly edited by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar and Pandit Moti Lal Kashmiri; and that, apart from general information and interesting news, it also contained letters and news-items suggesting that Maulvi Jafar Ali (Head, Department of Theology, Delhi College) was not suitably qualified to hold his post.

Official reports from 1849 to 1854 suggest that the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* was continually being published during those years, though another (religious) newspaper edited by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar ceased publication in 1850.

When *Urdu Akhbar* suspended publication is difficult to say; we learn from official reports, however, that it was certainly being published from 1844 to 1854. A reasonable guess would be that it suspended publication for two years either before 1844 or after 1854—though in the absence of reliable external evidence it would only remain a guess.

In the light of all this confusion the date of the first issue of *Urdu Akhbar* must remain uncertain though the calculations based on the issues of 1840-41 period must be preferred to those of 1857. In the opinion of the present author *Urdu Akhbar* was probably first issued in February 1837.

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'Delhi Urdu Akhbar' Press

Some investigation into the origin and ownership of this press is necessary not only because it was the first lithographic press in Delhi but also because it is closely associated with the name of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, the father of the great Urdu prose-writer Maulvi Muhammad Husain Azad. It is also important because the first Urdu newspaper from northern India was published from here.

Though much has been written about this press by well-known researchers and scholars yet in the light of some recent investigations it seems necessary to bring certain facts about the press into sharp focus.

Dr. Muhammad Baqar, the grandson of Maulvi Muhammad Husain Azad, has in a learned article written about the press in connection with Maulvi Muhammad Baqar:

> Maulvi Muhammad Baqar brought out the first Urdu newspaper in 1836 soon after freedom of the press was granted by the British. He also established his own press where his own and other books were printed. First, it was known as the Ja'faria Press; later, its name was changed to Urdu Akhbar Press. The Maulana had got a big house constructed for this Press inside Kashmiri Darwaza, Delhi. The poet Zauq wrote the chronogram
>
> "Sa'dat gaah-e-imam-e-darain"
>
> thus giving clue to its date.[1]

The line above attributed to Zauq is metrically complete, but the date which it suggests is 908 A.H./1503 A.D.—which is absurd. Moreover, till the beginning of 1840 Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was neither its proprietor nor manager. In the early issues of 1840 the following print-line appeared in the newspaper: "Under the management of Syed Moinuddin, proprietor."

Mr. Atiq Siddiqui writes:

> Though the Indian Muslims of this period hardly liked to enter into social contact with the British yet Maulana

1. Quoted in *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 267.

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Muhammad Baqar was on very close terms with Mr. Taylor, the Principal of Delhi College. The two collaborated with each other in many ventures. It was through the agency of Mr. Taylor that the Maulana came to possess the press.

When Maulana Muhammad Baqar thought of bringing out an Urdu newspaper he felt the need of a printing press. Fortunately, he came to possess a very good press. It is generally believed that the Principal of Delhi College had purchased a press in order to print text-books. A glance at the *Dictionary of National Biography* reveals the fact that the press had been purchased by Dr. Sprenger when he was the Principal of Delhi College. It was used to print College textbooks. The printing, however, proved to be too expensive, and so the press mostly remained idle. Mr. Taylor, who succeeded Dr. Sprenger as Principal, wished to sell it off. What better opportunity could offer itself to Maulvi Muhammad Baqar. He could buy it easily since he was on friendly terms with Mr. Taylor, and thus he laid the foundation of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*.

Dr. Maulvi Abdul Haq has written the following about the three successive principals of Delhi College in his well-known book, *Marhoom Delhi College*:

The general Committee of the College passed a resolution in 1839 that a Principal might be appointed to look after the work of the College in a whole-time capacity. He was also to supervise the work in the English Institution and the Oriental Division. At the same time he was also to impart instruction to higher classes is Science and literature. The proposal was accepted and a full-time Principal was appointed at the monthly salary of Rs. 600/-. This gentleman, however, left after two years owing to illness, and went back to England.

His place was taken by Dr. Sprenger, M.D., Asstt. Surgeon, Bengal Service. However, Dr. Sprenger too had to leave in 1848 as he was deputed to Lucknow by the Government of India. There he was given the challenging and congenial task of cataloguing the books and manuscripts in the libraries of the Sultan of Oudh. This catalogue is

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indeed a creditable achievement prepared with great diligence and ability. During the absence of Dr. Sprenger, Mr. Taylor, the Head Master, was asked to officiate as Principal. Dr. Sprenger returned to his old job on 14 January 1850...

It was in 1854 that Mr. Taylor again began to officiate as Principal. He was an old teacher of the College and had been associated with it since its inception. He continued to be Principal even during the eventful days of 1857.

These facts, given by Dr. Maulvi Abdul Haq, are also corroborated by the words of the *Dictionary of National Biography*:

> Sprenger: In 1844 he was appointed Principal of the Mohammadan College at Delhi, where he remained until 1848.
>
> He is also credited during his residence at Delhi with having printed at his lithographic press in Hindustani, the first weekly periodical to appear in an Indian vernacular. On 6th December 1847 he received the appointment, and some two months later proceeded to Lucknow, the principal home of oriental lore in India; he was employed in the congenial task of cataloguing the manuscripts in the libraries of the King of Oudh, the treasures of which were almost depleted during the Indian mutiny.[1]

The above quotation from the *Dictionary* gives the exact words describing the press. What Dr. Muhammad Sadiq, and following him Mr. Atiq Siddiqui, have attributed to the *Dictionary* is nowhere to be found in the above statement. There is no trace in it of the account given about Mr. Taylor and Maulvi Muhammad Baqar. As a matter of fact, there is not a single word about them in the *Dictionary*.

In the light of the above quotation it can be authoritatively stated that Dr. Sprenger was staying in Delhi till 1848, and his press was also there. It was in February 1848 that Mr. Taylor was appointed his successor. It is obvious that the press that had been bought during the tenure of Dr. Sprenger as Principal must have been sold after February 1848. Now, it is intriguing that the press which was certainly purchased after February

1. *Dictionary of the National Biography*, Vol. XVIII, p. 833, col. II.

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1848 could be used in 1837 by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar to bring out his vernacular paper. The author of *Hindustani Akhbar Nawesi* has revealed certain interesting facts about the press and the newspaper in question in the light of the early issues of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*:

> The title of the newspaper was *Delhi Akhbar* till 3 May 1840 but it was changed to *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* from the issue dated 10 May 1840. No reason was given for this change of name. Then, in the early issues of the paper, the printline ran as follows: "Printed under the management of Syed Moinuddin, proprietor." All of a sudden, however, the print-line was completely changed: "Printed under the management of Syed Moinuddin and Imdad Beg." Both these names were dropped from the issue of 12 August 1840 and their place was taken by "Moti Lal, printer and publisher."
>
> In the light of the above fact it can safely be said that the press was not owned by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar until the beginning of 1840, nor was he the printer or manager of the press. There is, however, in the 13 September 1842 issue of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*, Delhi, the following statement in connection with the other paper *Mazhar-al-Haq*, edited by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar:
>
> We have reliably learnt that Maulvi Mohd Baqar, who is the manager of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* press, has, for the last four weeks, been issuing a new newspaper, called *Mazhar-al-Haq*...

A number of publications printed and published by the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press are preserved at Maulana Azad Library (Aligarh). They are too numerous to be listed here; only a few may be mentioned:

1. *Khulasat-al-Tawarikh* by Marshman; translated into Urdu by Swaroop Narayan and Shiv Narayan, senior scholars at Delhi College (1844); printed and published by Pandit Moti Lal at the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* press at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar in Etiqad Khan lane near Panja Sharif.

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2. *Tuzak-e-Timuri*, translated from beginning to end by Maulvi Subhan Bakhsh, Second Teacher, at Arabic College, Delhi in 1845; printed under the management of Pandit Moti Lal, printer and publisher, at the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar in Etiqad Khan lane.
3. *Translation of Tarikh-e-Iran*: printed under the management of Pandit Moti Lal, printer and publisher at *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar Saheb in Etiqad Khan lane.

Thus, it is obvious that the Press was certainly located at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar in 1844 and Pandit Moti Lal Kashmiri was its printer and publisher. The present writer clearly recalls (and he can depend on his memory) having read another publication from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press and he can confidently assert that the said book bore 1842 as the publication date and that the print-line contained the name of Pandit Moti Lal as its printer and publisher and also that it referred to the house of Maulvi Baqar in Etiqad Khan lane as the place where the press was located. It may thus be stated that the Press of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* was certainly located in the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar in 1842 and that Pandit Moti Lal was its printer and publisher.

An interesting fact brought to light by a scrutiny of the publications of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press pertaining to the period 1850-1857 is that none of these publications bears the name of Pandit Moti Lal as printer and publisher; instead, there appears on them the name of the well-known prose-writer Muhammad Husain Azad:

1. *Usool Qawaid Maliat*, translator: Pt. Ayodhya Nath, professor. Delhi College, printed in 1850 at *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar under the supervision of Muhammad Husain (Azad), printer and publisher.
2. *Kulliyat-e-Inshah Allah Khan*; The Works diligently corrected by the staff of the Press at *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press; under the supervision of Muhammad Husain (Azad).

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The account of the Press given by the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* is not correct:

> *Urdu Akhbar Press*; Delhi; at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, manager; (the paper) issued by Pandit Moti Lal; 15 October 1845.

The Editorship of Delhi Urdu Akhbar

Though the account given here of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* is getting inordinately lengthy, it may yet be thought necessary to discuss the problem of the paper's editorship with a view to settle certain controversial questions in the light of new research.

In the 29 November 1843 issue of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*, Delhi, there is an Urdu letter by Maulvi Muhammad Akbar, the father of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar. From it we learn that some local Delhi journalist (one Aulad Ali, the editor of *Aina-e-Geti Numa*) had published in his paper a scurrilous attack on the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*. As the latter was an almost saintly person, he did not think it proper to make a rejoinder. Moreover. he forbade his disciples also from doing the same. Maulvi Muhammad Akbar who had a great regard for the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar* and was not happy with the editor of *Aina-e-Geti Numa* could not tolerate this mean and unbecoming act. He wrote a long letter in defence of the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar* and sent it to its editor for publication in his paper. The latter reluctantly agreed to publish it. This published letter reveals the fact that at the time of the writing of that letter Maulvi Muhammad Akbar was not only the editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* but also of *Mazhar-al-Haq*. The letter begins thus:

> Letter from Muhammad Akbar,
> Royal Chronicler at the Court,
>
> I have come to learn that some contemptible person has made a few scurrilous remarks about you. And you replied, "In response to bitterness we show sweetness."
>
> And you also forbade your disciples from making a reply. Your response was indeed the best: you did not practise tit for tat. This sincere admirer of yours, the

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manager and editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* and *Mahzar-al-Haq*, sends you the following for publication in your paper...

It appears that Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was not only of good extraction on both sides but also a true son and successor of his father. His many rivalries, sharpness of tongue, boldness and truthfulness have been mentioned not only by researchers but did also earn a word of reproof from the government as is revealed from official records. No doubt Maulvi Muhammad Baqar could never resist an opportunity of attacking and bringing into disrepute the respectable people of the city. In this he was the true son of his father as the latter's letter in *Siraj-al-Akhbar* indicates.

The 12 August 1840 issue of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* confirms the fact that in the initial phase Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was not its editor. The few references to him suggest that at that time he was not only not known but did not have anything to do with *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*. For example, an announcement in the following words was made in the circular translated by him (printed at *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Press);

> This (circular) has been translated by one Maulvi Muhammad Baqar who was formerly a teacher in Delhi College. He has for long been a Collector and Tehsildar. He has specialised in revenue affairs.

In the light of the above it can be authoritatively stated that Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was not the editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* till November 1843. The editorial duties were performed by his father, Maulvi Muhammad Akbar. We, however, learn from *Siraj-al-Akhbar*, dated 13 September 1843, that in that year the administrative affairs of the newspaper were looked after by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar and that Moti Lal was the printer and publisher of the newspaper.

The official reports for 1844-48 indicate that *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* was then published under the joint editorship of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar and Motilal Kashmiri. These reports also indicate that though the circulation of the paper had gone up from 69 to 79, the income had been reduced by 50%. The reduction in income might have been caused by the fact that

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the older subscribers had not paid their subscription. Here is the relevant extract from the official report:

> The Delhi Ordoo Ukhbar (sic) improved its prospects in the four years interval (1844-48) from a circulation of 69 copies to 79 per issue. Income and expenditure are, however, shown as having declined by 50%. Probably due to unrecovered subscriptions and consequent retrenchment. The paper was run by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar and Moti Lal, a Kashmiri Pandit. Apart from the general information published in the paper, a number of letters appeared against Jaffar Ali, the Shia Arabic teacher of Delhi College, who was condemned as inefficient and thoroughly unfit for the job. A simple sheet of lithographed paper, the rate of subscription was Rs. 2 per month.[1]

The proprietor and editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* continued to follow till the end the policy that they had adopted from the first. As a matter of fact, the tone became harsher with the passage of time. The official report for 1854 confirms the fact:

> Delhi Ordoo Akhbar was described as a scurrilous print which abounded in personal and covert attacks on the native gentlemen of respectability who differed from the editor in their religious views.[2]

Delhi Urdu Akhbar was a weekly printed on 4 pages of 12″×8″ size and published every Sunday. The pages were divided into two columns, and each column contained 33 lines. The name of the paper was printed on the top of the page. The issue and volume number, along with date and volume number, were printed below the title. The monthly subscription rate was Rs. 2/-. The advance subscription rate was: six-monthly, Rs. 11/- and annual Rs. 20/-.

The old and moth-eaten files of the *Akhbar* contain vivid pictures of contemporary social and political life. The decline that had set in Delhi, the capital of the Mughal Empire, the helplessness of the nominal Emperor, economic decay and chaos, the disintegration of Mughal culture and the beginning of

1. Cited in Natrajan, *A History of Indian Journalism*, p. 50.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

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a new age, all are mirrored in the pages of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*. In every issue of the newspaper there appeared a permanent column entitled "Huzoor-e-Wala." This column contained news about and from the royal court which throw light on the actual conditions prevailing around the throne:

Maulvi Muhammad Taqi who had last month been appointed Mukhtar at the royal court by offering a *nazrana* has now resigned his job having fully experienced the actual state of affairs—lack of financial resources, huge expenditure and the amount of debt (exceeding forty thousand rupees). His complaint is that the people working at the court are greedy and do not allow any honest Mukhtar to stay at his post. Efficiency on the Mukhtar's part acts as restraint on their unfair and corrupt activities. These persons, therefore, united to remove the Mukhtar. Seeing these conditions, the said Khan (Maulvi Muhammad Taqi) voluntarily resigned his job (1 March 1840).

Strange stories are being told about the conditions in the Royal Fort. No help or redress is available to the poor people against the high-handedness of the court officials. Salaries have not been paid for the past five months. Only those having access to the Emperor or the Mukhtar or the Royal Physician are able to get their salary on the due date. It is said that the Mukhtar is a seasoned and experienced person and does things in the name of Prince Mirza Shah Farrukh Bahadur. Besides, it is said that a few persons—including the Royal Physician, one or two sons of Raja ji Sukh Rai, a servant boy called Hafiz and a few other parasites—have come together round the throne and do whatever they like. They constitute the real power behind the throne. It is obvious that the physician can only prescribe medicine, businessmen know only about shop-keeping and the Hafiz can only teach children. What do they know of the art of government. One can very well imagine the condition of the government if such persons are at the helm of affairs (12 May 1841).

Thus we see that the true state of affairs prevailing in the small society within the four walls of the royal fort is vividly portrayed in extracts such as the ones given above. Moreover,

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we also see that there is no apparent desire for reform; instead, everywhere there is a hankering after a life of pleasure and indulgence. The following extract gives us some idea of the goings-on in the royal palace:

> These days an interesting case is being heard in the criminal court. Wilayat Ali who is a captain in the Fort is accused of assaulting a lady. It is heard that the news of this assault reached the (British) agent who directed the Magistrate to investigate the affair. Though the said Wilayat Ali pleaded not guilty he was yet ordered to present himself at the criminal court through the Nazir. Since Wilayat Ali is an employee of the Royal Fort and the peons of the judicial court cannot arrest any one there, he could not be apprehended. Wilayat Ali took care not to venture out of the court. The Nazir was therefore helpless. One day, however, the said Captain happened to ride through the city accompanied by attendants. The court peons were in ambush to apprehend him, and they did so easily. Later, he was released by the Magistrate on a bail of Rs. 600 in three instalments. The said Captain (Wilayat Ali) is a resident of Akbarabad. He is said to have brought five serving-girls for Prince Mirza Shah Farrukh Bahadur through his relatives. Only God knows the truth. If persons of his kind occupy high positions in the Fort then one can very well imagine the consequences (19 April 1840).

If, on the one hand, princes of royal blood and courtiers, indifferent to the welfare of the people, led a life of pleasure and indulgence, then, on the other, the ordinary officials and court employees too did not lag behind in abducting and forcefully enjoying the wives and daughters of the poor. That sexual mores within the fort were far from ideal is evident from the account of infrequent occurrences when culprits were brought to book:

> News from the Exalted Fort (Qil'a-e-Mu'alla) reveal that the nose of a serving-girl was chopped off by orders of the Emperor for indulging in sexual vice. The matter has been brought to the knowledge of the Agent's court. A great legal battle is ahead (2 May 1841).

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The conditions at the court of Oudh were no better than those in Delhi. There too sinfulness and vice had reached its acme. Economic depression too was at its lowest point. The subjects had no redress against reigning tyranny:

It appears that owing to the ruler's negligence and indifference the condition of the state of Oudh is extremely bad, and the tyranny of the executive officers has brought ruin to the lives of the subjects. The night is indeed rare when an incident of theft or burglary does not occur. It is said that the Sultan of Oudh himself is just and fair but the officers that serve him are corrupt and inefficient. Nobody allows the true facts about the condition of the people to reach the Sultan. It is deplorable that inefficient executives are in control of authority (26 March 1845).

Lucknow: The *Agra Akhbar* reveals that owing to the ignorance of the royal court at Lucknow about the tyranny of officials, the condition of the subjects has become pitiable. Their complaints are never heard; corruption and bribery are rampant. All this was brought to light by the following incident. On the 16th of last month the City Kotwal (Chief of Police) who happens to be the father-in-law of Nawab Sharfuddaulah, a minister of the Sultan, got a respectable merchant arrested on the false charge of buying stolen goods. The real aim was to extort a bribe from him. The merchant was first dragged to the Kotwali, flogged, tortured and dishonoured in many ways. Seeing this condition about three hundred other merchants gathered together and marched towards the royal Palace to draw the Sultan's attention to the Kotwal's tyranny. When His Majesty heard the noise outside the palace he asked his courtiers what it was all about. The men around the Sultan happened to be Nawab Sharfuddaulah's stooges. They misguided His Majesty by saying that a large crowd of Hindus were performing certain religious rites as the festival of Holi was near! Disappointed, the merchants and respectable citizens turned towards the British Resident concerned as they were about their lives and property. They waited outside the Residency till evening in order to protest against the injustice meted out to the poor shop-keeper.

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In short, it is only because of the lack of information, on the part of the Sultan, as to the real state of affairs that situations as the one described above have arisen. The incident narrated above took place in the capital itself; what the condition of the subjects must be in the countryside and the outlying parts can best be left to the readers' imagination (14 March 1841).

All this was not confined to Delhi and Lucknow alone, almost every one of the native states in the country had become a centre of luxury, indulgence and tyranny on the part of the rulers. Everywhere the subjects were in a miserable condition and were eager to get rid of the rulers. The only one to get any benefit out of the situation was the government of the Company Bahadur. The Company fished in troubled waters and exploited the situation. The following extract throws light on how the British were all the time planning to make use of the incompetence and helplessness of native rulers:

> Our readers may note that Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan, the Rais of Rampur, had been suffering from paralysis for more than a year and was thus unable to walk. All this while his condition deteriorated also owing to his habit of hard drinking. His condition has been very critical since the month of June. As the Nawab is issueless, many among his close relatives nourish the ambition of succeeding him. In order to prevent any conflict arising from the Nawab's demise, the Company government has been planning to nominate a successor.
>
> It may also be noted that the Afghans of Rampur are known throughout the country for their intemperateness, haughtiness and troublesomeness. They are easily provoked into internecine warfare and their vengeance extends to include the family and children of their enemies. It is for this reason that no Englishman likes to go there even on a pleasure trip (23 August 1840).

It was not only the Muslim states alone that had become centres of corruption and moral degeneration; decay had seeped into the very fabric of society and the non-Muslim states were no exception to the rule. The people who surrounded the rulers

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were all given to mutual rivalries, luxurious living and self-centredness. It was therefore impossible for anyone to rule with impartiality, justice and moral integrity. The news in the 3rd January 1841 issue of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, entitled "The Story of Sher Singh," gives us a glimpse into the conditions prevailing in non-Muslim native states:

> We learn that at the time when the late Maharajah Ranjit Singh had conquered and annexed the areas surrounding his Kingdom and was returning towards his capital Lahore, his consort Rani Mahtab Kunwar gave birth to two sons, Sher Singh and Kunwar Tara Singh. The late Maharajah had doubts about the fidelity of his royal consort. As Sher Singh grew up he laid claims to a share in Kingdom. The late Maharajah agreed to give him certain lands as jagir. Sher Singh acquired with effort some skill in the art of warfare and was thus able to impress Maharajah who conferred on him the governorship of the province of Kashmir. It was as the governor of Kashmir that Sher Singh fell into the evil habits of drinking and other forms of indulgence due to the influence of his courtiers. This led to the breakdown of the administration in the province of Kashmir.

Contentment and lack of worldly ambition are no doubt rare virtues in man but sloth, passivity and the desire to escape from the responsibilities of life are not to be confused with real contentment which is a positive value. Sloth leads to inaction and the loss of the will to live. It was such a sloth and inaction that had set in at the court of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. The following extract from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, giving a brief summary of an agreement between the Company government and the Royal Courts, is a proof of the decay caused by passivity and sloth:

> A set of regulations relating to civil and criminal cases arising out of disputes within the jurisdiction of the Exalted Fort, and proposes by the Company government, has been issued on 7 October 1841. A summary of some of the articles is given below:

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Article 1: The administration of civil and criminal courts within the Exalted Fort shall remain within royal jurisdiction. In serious cases His Majesty shall consult (the British) Agent. Ordinary courts (outside the Fort) shall have no jurisdiction in these matters:

Article 2: When those living within the Fort are outside they shall no doubt be within the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts except in specific cases indicated in the following article;

Article 3: The Emperor and the Heir Apparent shall personally be outside the jurisdiction of the two kinds of ordinary courts; the sons and brothers of the present and former Emperors shall be outside the jurisdiction of ordinary criminal courts but not outside the jurisdiction of civil courts; they shall be tried for criminal cases only through the Agent who shall take care to accord them due respect;

Article 4: Civil Suits on the residents of the Fort living temporarily outside the Fort shall be filed through the Agent;

Article 5: The Emperor has full title for life in state properties and has full control and jurisdiction over royal gifts made either by him or his predecessors. Those laying claim to such gifts shall apply to the Emperor either directly or through the Agent, and not to any civil court. The jurisdiction in all such cases shall be that of the Emperor, and the civil courts shall see to it that the Emperor's orders are carried out...

It is not only the moral degeneration, inefficiency, corruption and tyranny of the native rulers and their courtiers that is glimpsed through in the pages of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* but also the injustices perpetuated by the officials of the Company government. The authority of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, the first editor of the newspaper, in matters relating to contemporary social, political and economic problems is unquestionable, and this notwithstanding his communalist bias and prejudice. The following extract from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* (dated 8 June 1840) may be cited:

> We happened to notice a letter in *Agra Akhbar* dated 8 June, written by someone about injustice done to him by

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the Collector of the district. The gist of the letter is given as follows: The Collector happens to be extremely inefficient, and does not know anything about general and revenue administration. I have served the government for a period of about twenty five or thirty years. During this period a few promotions have gradually come my way. The Collector, however, is not pleased with me, and is doing his best to get me either demoted or dismissed from my job accusing me of inefficiency. The real motive, however, is different. He is planning to give my post to a friend of his own who has been invited from a distant town and whom the Collector wishes to help.

After giving the substance of the letter, the editor makes the following pithy and forceful comment:

Undoubtedly the above letter brings an unpleasant truth to light. The Indian staff is unfairly given a bad name. If certain conditions are fulfilled the Indian staff too would be found to be of the same standard of efficiency as the English officers. The Indians should be paid salaries on par with the English officers. The promotions or dismissal of the Indian staff should be made by high authorities and should be dependent on the whims of officers of the rank of collectors, magistrates or Deputy Collectors.

The middle of the nineteenth century was indeed a period of disorder and anarchy in most parts of India that were ruled by native princes. Interestingly, however, the condition, particularly relating to law and order, prevailing in regions under the dynamic, more efficient administration of the British was not much different from that of the rest of the country. One would not have expected this to be true but for the glimpses we get in the pages of contemporary newspapers. Here are relevant extracts from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*:

Calcutta

We learn that in Calcutta thefts and burglaries have become so common these days that citizens have been completely deprived of their sleep at night. Not a night passes that the wealthy are not deprived of their belongings in some part of

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the city or the other. The police pretend to be helpless though, it is obvious, such a state of affairs could not have come to prevail without their connivance. (12 December 1841).

Police officers in the areas under the British rule, especially those in the 24 Pargana district, have taken law into their own hands and inflict all kinds of injustices on the common people... In the case of a theft, the sufferer is forced through unfair means to conceal the fact. He is threatened with public disgrace. In case the aggrieved party insists on lodging a report, it is abused, threatened with imprisonment and accused of having itself engineered the theft. Money is extorted from the sufferer and his neighbours. Things have come to such a pass that people are afraid even to utter the word 'theft'. Nothing is being done to alleviate the situation. (12 December, 1841).

The implementation of laws and strong punitive measures are not enough to curb crimes; inner discipline and powerful moral drives alone can lead to the creation of a crime-free society. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, who was a journalist of considerable perceptiveness, was seized with the problem of the growing incidence of crime in contemporary society. Consequently, he not only condemned the policies of the government but also suggested ways and means of curbing the incidence of crime. The following extracts would throw light on this aspect:

Rajputana

(A number of able British officers) have been deputed to this region to curb the growing menace of lawlessness and anarchy.

These officers are men of extra-ordinary ability and administrative acumen, and, it is hoped, they would succeed in improving the situation.

It is heard that a certain number of tribals in this region have taken to robbery and murder as a profession. They are used to robbing merchants and travellers under the leadership of a *thakur*. Murder comes easy to them. All attempts on the part of rulers in the past have failed to stop

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them from indulging in such acts. Some people have proposed that *jazia* or punitive tax be imposed on them while others argue that such a tax would only make them more headstrong and they would strongly resent the imposition of such a tax. They would increasingly indulge in theft and robbery in order to pay the tax.

Perhaps the best proposal is to rehabilitate them by granting revenue-free land to them. This would lead to an increase in agricultural production and would also keep the tribals busy, away from mischief...We hope that the concerned authorities would give proper thought to the proposed scheme (17 January, 1841).

Prisoners

A number of *thugs* had been imprisoned in Jabalpur on the orders of Major Sleeman. They were engaged in making carpets and *shatranjis* etc. At first, they were unwilling to engage in such activity so much so that they put fire to the building that housed them. A stronger building has now been made to keep them. They are now believed to have reconciled themselves to their new mode of life. There is no doubt that this method of making prisoners work in prison and of giving them the rudiments of education is highly appropriate. It is obvious that when the inmates of the prison will be released they will not resort to indulging in crime again since after being released they will be able to earn a modest living by doing similar work. It would be advisable on the part of all district authorities to follow this example. The District Magistrate of Delhi has already had this policy adopted, and he is believed to visit the prison periodically in order to see for himself that the policy is properly implemented. It is said that the crime rate among released prisoners has considerably come down due to this policy (*Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, 8 August 1841).

Matrimony, as sanctioned by religious and social codes, satisfies one of the primary needs of man, and all rational and liberal opinion has always encouraged not only marriage but also re-marriage or the marriage of widows. Owing to certain historical factors, marriage of widows had come to be looked

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down upon in late medieval and early modern India. The taboo on re-marriage had crept even into Muslim society though Islam had always encouraged a liberal and humane code—contrary to the practice in other contemporary societies. The social reform movement among the Hindus, especially in Bengal, struck a sympathetic cord in regions as far north as Delhi. The following item from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* (14 October 1841) confirms this:

Calcutta

> Sometime ago a rich man of Calcutta, named Babu Moti Lal, had announced an award of ten thousand rupees to be given to any young Hindu who would marry a widow but no one came forward to claim the award. It appears, however, now that some one might lay a claim to the award. A young Hindu, educated at an English institution called Hindu College, is believed to have married a young Hindu widow.

The fire of jealousy burns fiercely and is destructive of all values. When jealousy turns itself into enemity and vindictiveness, it causes havoc—as it did in the case of the great Urdu poet, Mirza Ghalib. He was the target of the envy of his contemporaries who were only too eager to seize an opportunity to defame and publicly disgrace him. The vices of drinking and gambling in which the great poet permitted himself to indulge came ultimately to cause him ruin since they were exploited by his enemies. He was arrested and put behind the bars and became the subject of endless scandals. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, an admirer of Shaikh Ibrahim Zauq—one of the chief rivals of Ghalib—could scarcely conceal his malicious glee and was most eloquent in presenting this case in a way that would preclude all hope of Ghalib's release. The following extract might help to bring to light the journalistic talent of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar that rivals that of a *Blackwood's*:

Gamblers

> It has been heard that a large number of notorious gamblers have been arrested from the house of Mirza Naushah (Mirza Ghalib) in Qasim Jan, Lane—Hashim Ali Khan, for

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example, who had once been committed to sessions. Mirza Naushah's house had become, it is alleged, a den of gamblers but no police officer had so far the courage to interfere and put an end to the nefarious activities going on there. A new police officer, a Saiyyad by caste and a remarkably courageous man, has recently been appointed as the Station House Officer of the area. Previously he was a Jumedar and is a very senior Officer. He has brought many a notorious criminal to book and is above greed.

The said Mirza Naushah is a noted poet, a scion of the gentry and a protege of Nawab Shamsuddin Khan, the murderer of Mr. William Fraser. It is believed that many a member of the gentry and nobility pleaded on behalf of Mirza Naushah but the said police officer paid no heed to their request, remained firm and relentless in his integrity and honesty and had all of them arrested. The offenders were fined in accordance with their respective status. Mirza Naushah was fined Rs. 100/- in default, he is to serve a term of imprisonment for four months.

May God protect this honest police officer! There are many influential relatives of this scion of the gentry. It would not be surprising if they succeed in harming this honest officer at an opportune moment. The authorities should pay due regard to the safety of this officer; such men are rare. (*Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, 15 August 1841).

Maulvi Muhammad Baqar should be given due recognition for his contribution to the development of modern Urdu prose: he rejected the contemporary predilection for rhymed and ornate prose in favour of a more idiomatic, work-a-day style. The language of the Urdu letters of Mirza Ghalib may really be said to have originated in the journalistic prose of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar. There is no doubt that Ghalib's epistolary prose is much more developed, civilised and sophisticated but, then, the difference might be traced to the individuality and the richer personality of the poet. If, however, it is only a question of precedence in time, the journalist has an edge over the poet.

Not only did Maulvi Baqar diverge from the contemporary prose style in his writings in *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* but he also did his best to encourage the literary and scholarly life of the

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capital through his newspaper. Not only did he publish accounts of *mushairas* (poetic symposia) and other literary gatherings in his paper but he also included in his pages latest poetic compositions of contemporary poets. The readers who had little access to the cosmopolitan life of Delhi could easily keep pace with literary developments and satisfy their taste through the pages of this newspaper. Thus, Maulvi Muhammad Baqar's contribution to the development of taste and literary talent cannot easily be forgotten.

The pages of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* not only contained the latest poetic compositions of renowned poets such as Bahadur Shah 'Zafar', Sheikh Ibrahim 'Zauq', Mirza Asadullah Khan 'Ghalib' and Hafiz Ghulam Rasool but they also included the work of the other popular poets of Delhi and the neighbouring areas. One of Ghalib's celebrated ghazals as well as a ghazal by Zafar was published in the 8 September 1852 issue of the paper. The death of Sheikh Ibrahim Zauq, the poetic mentor of the Emperor, engulfed the literary world of Delhi in gloom, and the pages of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* continued to publish poetic elegies and chronograms in verse for a long time.

The chain of events leading to the great rebellion against the rule of the Company government started in February 1857. Urdu newspapers were already instigating the common people against foreign rule in the garb of apparently innocuous publication of news. Much of the fury of the Rebellion undoubtedly originated in the dissemination of slanted news through the vernacular press.

Delhi was apparently calm till May 1857 but, inside only a little flame was needed to ignite the lava. That little flame was provided by the torch-bearers of freedom when they entered the city on 11 May 1857. This strange transformation of the meekly oppressed into the defiantly rebellious was a phenomenon indeed. We gather an impression to this effect from the very first issue that appeared after the upheaval. The editorial commented:

> With a single revolution of the azure heavens,
> Neither did Nadir remain nor his empire.
> Each instant and moment of our passing existence ought to be a reminder to us of the Promised Day but it is our great

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misfortune that owing to our ignorance and tragic forgetfulness we have to be reminded of the Day of Judgment by such phenomenal events as the one that took place recently. Such events are meant to scourge us into obedience to the Divine Will. Rulers whose power seemed unshakeable till a little while ago have suddenly lost their domination... It is such an incredible event as to make one wonder if it did indeed come to pass. Did what we saw really take place in fact or did it pertain to the realm of dreams?

It was on 9 May 1857 that the champions of freedom from Meerut reached the vicinity of Delhi and insisted on presenting themselves before the Emperor. The Qiledar, on getting the word from the Emperor to that affect, refused them admittance and made them go away for the moment. They, however, returned in larger numbers and forcefully entered the city and the fort. The *Siraj-al-Akhbar* tells us that the gates of the fort were forced open and the crowd entered them like a host of locusts. The Qiledar was wounded and all the Englishmen, whether soldiers or civilians, were immediately put to death (*Siraj-al-Akhbar*, 9 May 1857). Initially, the Emperor, owing to the fear of retaliation from the British and his own old age and helplessness, was unwilling to join the fight against the Company government. The *Siraj-al-Akhbar* (9 May 1857) again informs us that the Emperor did indeed feel sorry for the merciless massacre of the British within the fort. The same issue of the *Siraj-al-Akhbar* also tells us that it was reluctantly that the Emperor agreed to take the command of the rebels in his hand.

While the Emperor was seized with the problem of the safety of life and property in the fort, the areas adjoining Delhi too came to be engulfed in the spirit of rebellion. Eventually, when the greater part of the country ranged itself against the British, the Emperor too was obliged to assume real powers and took personal charge of the administration. Not only the personal servants and the court entourage but also those formerly employed by the Company government offered their services to the Emperor. Thus Maulvi Muhammad Baqar who had worked as Tehsildar in the Company government presented

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himself before the Emperor and was duly honoured. Jeevan Lal wrote in his Diary (p. 111):

> Today (11 May 1857) the Emperor granted audience to Maulvi Muhammad Baqar and Maulvi Abdul Qadir as both of them had discharged their duties very well. The latter informed (the Emperor) that he had made arrangements so as to force the rebels to leave the City of their own accord. The Emperor rewarded Maulvi Muhammad Baqar with a "Khal'at" and sent him home with great pomp and honour. (*Siraj-al-Akhbar*, 9 May 1857)

Notwithstanding his journalistic preoccupations, the Maulvi dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the discharge of his newly entrusted administrative duties, and was soon able to win the confidence of the Emperor. It was he who was sent to bring to court safely the treasury at Gurgaon:

> Then came a rider with the news that a treasure consisting of a few lakh rupees of land revenue from Gurgaon was being brought to Delhi under the care of a company of soldiers. It was attacked by three hundred Mewatis, and a fight was in progress. Orders were immediately given to Muhammad Baqar, the printer, to take two companies of soldiers with a mounted canon and bring the treasure safely to Delhi. (Jivan Lal's Diary, p. 111)

The above incident narrated in Jivan Lal's Diary is also confirmed by Maulvi Zakaullah. It may be pointed out that the outstanding journalist in Maulvi Baqar was no less a fighter than the man who was asked to lead a group of soldiers to bring the treasure safely back to Delhi. He used his pen not only to report faithfully the events of the Mutiny but also to rouse the spirit of rebellion in his compatriots. The following gist of a long report in the issue of 17 May 1857 may give some indication of his calibre as a journalist:

> It being summer the Magistrate's Court was holding its session in the morning of 11 May 1857. The Magistrate was engaged in dispensing justice, and the other officers too were busy issuing orders in their respective departments. The process of the dispensation of justice was however interrupted when, soon after 7 a.m., the Mir Bahri—the

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Commanding Officer in charge of bridges—brought the information that early in the morning a few Turkish cavalrymen crossed the bridge at Meerut cantonment and began harassing his men. They wanted to plunder the revenue treasury. The few that had crossed over were cleverly engaged in conversation by the Commander while some of his men unlocked the bridge to prevent others from coming over. Those, however, who had already come on to the other side (controlled by the British) put fire to the Revenue House and the official residence located on Salim Pur Road. On hearing this report the Magistrate felt concerned and went away to consult another officer in an adjoining room. From there he went to the treasury and asked the staff guarding it to be ready. The guards loaded their guns and took positions on each of the doors of the court building. All this naturally created a stir in the court building.

It was learnt that the Magistrate had gone to the Commissioner. It was also heard that the rebel Turks had gathered in front of the Royal Balcony and requested His Majesty to allow them to enter the Exalted Fort. Meanwhile the Magistrate had returned after consulting the Commissioner and ordered that his wife and children be brought from his residence adjoining the Court. A little later they were sent away to Kashmiri Gate which, too, was heavily guarded. Meanwhile, the Sessions Judge also came to the Court building, took a round and returned to his residence after dismissing the court. On the other side, the Qiledar presented himself before His Majesty and asked to be allowed to go out and warn the Turkish soldiers gathered outside against indulging in loot and murder. However, His Majesty, out of his graciousness, prevented the Qiledar from doing so, who thereafter went away. Later, it was heard that the Qiledar, Bare Sahib, the English doctor and all their ladies had been put to death and the Turkish soldiers had entered the Fort. (Note the journalist's malicious irony in the phrase "out of graciousness").

His Majesty put on his royal robes and arms and arrived at the Court. At first a few rebel soldiers entered the city, and after killing the Englishmen in Darya Ganj

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and burning two bunglows reached the Hospital near the Fort. They sent Chaman Lal to the Eternal Hospital. It is said that the Qiledar, Bare Sahib, the English doctor and others had posted themselves near Calcutta Gate and were trying to find out the real state of affairs on Meerut Road when the rebel soldiers came in sight. One of them shot down an Englishman with his pistol, and the rest were killed a little later, as narrated above, near the Fort gate. Then, more of the rebels arrived and the City was full of rumours about Englishmen having been killed in this part or that.

The present scribe, too, came out of his house to see things for himself inspired as he was by a regard for glory of his Faith and hearing the sound of gunfire. I was confronted by a strange sight: people were running from Kashmiri Gate side into the market. Personal safety was no doubt in danger, but dearer to me than my personal safety was the desire for the enjoyment of unusual sights and the other equally strong desire to give a faithful eye-witness account of events to my readers. As I moved forward, I heard gunshots at a place a little ahead of me. Soon I saw the Sahib Bahadur running away for his life, sword in hand, and a Tilanga following him with guns close at his heels. In the rear were a crowd of common people, some with sticks in their hands, others with bamboos, chasing the beleaguered Englishmen at hot speed. They hunted them down from Zeenat Bara towards the Canal. Your humble servant, the present scribe, started moving towards the open fields of Nasir Ganj. When he reached there he saw that a score of Tilangas were stationed near Fakhrul Masajid Mosque. Some people nearby were pointing out to them the Englishmen hiding in the mosque. The Tilangas went inside with their guns and in no time put all of them to death.

Going a little forward I saw some two or three hundred Turkish soldiers and Tilangas in front of the Church and near the residence of Mr. Collins. They were moving about in small groups and asking people the places where Englishmen were hiding. As soon as some information was forthcoming, a small contingent of soldiers would immediately

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be posted, and a few minutes later some more dead bodies of Englishmen would lie scattered in lanes and by-lanes. The soldiers would enter the various bungalows and put to death all the ladies and children. Only a few fortunate ones might have escaped by hiding themselves in unlikely places. All the bunglows were plundered. People took away all the furniture, even the marble blocks on the floor, from the Church and the Court building. A little while later I went towards the Magazine; moving away from the Mosque of Nawab Hamid Ali Khan, I sighted the dead body of Mr. Nixon. Someone with a sense of humour had put a biscuit near it. The Holy Fighters had by now come to control the Magazine. When I turned my attention towards the College, I found that property worth thousands of rupees—furniture, pictures, scientific instruments and precious books in English and Persian--was being looted by people. Even the door frames and mattings were not spared.

Even when I had returned home after witnessing all these sights with a sorrowing eye, I could hear the sound of gunfire which was, soon after three o'clock, punctuated by the earth-shattering sound of cannon-fire. It was repeated soon after while those who had been stunned by the first were still speculating about its origin. Immediately did I go upstairs to find out what had happened. I was soon overwhelmed by a sound of such magnitude that I thought it to be the Doomsday trumpet. I soon realized that the Magazine had been blown away. A cloud of dust covered the atmosphere; huge stones and pieces of masonary were blown about like birds and leaves of trees in a dust storm. The Humble One (meaning the writer of these lines) immediately came downstairs, fearing lest some stone or other object might hit him as he stood on the roof watching the dreadful sight. Later, it was learnt that a few of the Holy Victors had climbed the wall of the Magazine in order to kill the Englishmen, their wives and children, who had enclosed themselves within the building for safety. Those imprisoned within did their best to defend themselves, even fired a couple of shots but to no avail. In the confusion

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however, following the blowing up of the underground tunnel some of the surrounded did manage to escape while others were killed. It is likely that the escapees perished later. It is heard that Mr. Taylor, the Principal of the College, too was among those surrounded inside the Magazine. His days were not perhaps numbered, so he lived on to die the next day in the vicinity of the same police station. This gentleman was a greatly prejudiced Christian and was not infrequently successful in tempting people to his faith. How strange are the ways of Providence! This man was fabulously wealthy. Two lakh rupees were deposited in his name in the banks of Delhi and Calcutta. Besides, he owned a number of palatial bunglows which he had let out at exorbitant rents. And yet, his great wealth notwithstanding, he would spend only four paisas on his person daily. The rest were all deposited in the bank. He would devote all his leisure to the maintenance of his accounts. He was not particular even about his dress. What strange sights does destiny daily bring before our view: The dead body of this wealthy person remained naked and covered with blood lying on the ground throughout the day. Spectators said he then truly looked like a dervish-beggar with a face laden with dust.

There was another English officer, Mr. Metcalf, the son of Mr. Thomson who met a similar fate. He came to the court at half past eight and engaged himself in administrative work despite the many warnings given to him by his compatriots. The result was that by the time he reached Nigambodh Gate he was pleading for mercy from door to door. He did succeed in begging a horse from an Agency Cavalryman and ran for life. Unfortunately, a Turk spotted him and gave him a chase. Eye-witnesses say he was riding away bareheaded and was being closely followed by Death a few steps behind determined as it was to outride and overtake him. He reached Ajmeri Gate, borrowed a cap of a gentlemen, ordered the closure of the Gate and rode away. The Turk too reached this Gate soon, ordered the gate to be opened, followed the Englishmen and, near a mound outside the Gate, despatched him to death. Some,

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however, think that the Englishman did succeed in running away to safety.

Mr. Bresford, the Bank Official: This Englishmen had been safe in the Magazine but, as destiny wished otherwise, went away to look after the bank treasury and his residence notwithstanding the admonitions of fellow Englishmen. He wanted to bring his wife and children too to the Magazine. At his residence, while he was talking to another Englishman, a servant came and informed him of the situation in the city. Mr. Bresford asked him the number of the rebel soldiers that were supposed to have come. When he was told that the number did not exceed twenty he retorted that such a small number of soldiers would harm only themselves and their brethren. What could they do to Englishmen! Saying this and asking that the treasury be properly looked after, he took the keys and went away. His wife and young children were in the room on the first floor. He too went there and gave instructions that his whereabouts should not be disclosed to anyone. It is said that in the end a rebel soldier... (the rest is moth-eaten) and the remaining were killed, the bank building was set on fire and treasury looted.

The other news-items in the issue are similarly indicative of the editor's malicious pleasure. Unlike Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Maulvi Muhammad Baqar showed little sympathy for the victims of the rebels' violence. Instead, he could scarcely conceal his glee at the thought of the massacre of innocent women and children and invited his readers to share the same with him. In another news-item he wrote:

> The majority of Englishmen with their families had found refuge in Kashmiri Gate. Though a massacre was going on in the rest of the city, these families were safe behind loaded cannons. The Victors too had not paid any attention to them as they were busy in establishing their control over the city. The cantonment regiment, however, which came to the city in the evening sent all of them to hell and thereafter entered the Exalted Fort.

An interesting feature of the second issue is a poem by Muhammad Husain Azad, the son of Maulvi Muhammad

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Baqar and the poet who was later to revolutionize Urdu literature. The poem faithfully reflects the mood of the great upheaval. It is too long to be translated in full but the following couplets would give a fair enough idea of the dominant theme:

It was only yesterday that the Nazarenes
Were the Glorious Ones and the World dispensers...
But (today) all their wisdom was of no avail,
All their strategies proved ineffective.

The same issue of *Urdu Akhbar* contains a number of news-items about the political situation in the vicinity of Delhi—how nobles and military leaders came to join forces with the Emperor:

Kol

It has come to our knowledge that four companies of soldiers from Kol have deserted the British and come to join His Majesty. They killed every single Englishman they came across on the way. The common people at Kol plundered the government treasury. They took away everything they could lay their hands on... The remaining soldiers at Kol too would soon come to Delhi.

Jhajhar

The ruler of Jhajhar has sent his son to the court of His Majesty and, it is heard, the father-in-law of the ruler too is soon to arrive at the court. It was earlier thought that the ruler of Jhajhar would not obey the Emperor. He had also given refuge to a few Englishmen. Now it has come to our knowledge that whatever Englishmen there were at Jhajhar have been expelled from there and sent towards the mountains.

The thought that Englishmen would be safe anywhere is futile. They seem to be victims of divine vengeance; nowhere in the country shall they find safety and security.

The concluding paragraph is interesting and reflects the general attitude of the Indian public during the mutiny. The rebellion lacked proper organisation and was not inspired by

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any disciplined body of ideas. There was, at the same time, little patriotic feeling in the leaders or the general public. For these reasons it was doomed to failure, and fail it did. Ordinary human values were totally ignored during the upheaval. British glory disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. The misery of the alien Englishmen was no doubt great but so also was the plight of the Indians themselves. The following extract from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* would give us some idea of the miserable condition of the capital itself during those days:

> The common people are greatly concerned about the plunder and killings that are going on all around. Not only the outsiders but the residents of the city themselves indulge in plunder and violence. The police posts have very little control over their respective environs though, no doubt, there are armymen to help them.
>
> Many residents of the city indulge in looting after disguising themselves as Tilanga soldiers. Already they are in possession of arms and ammunition forcibly taken from the British. Five people were arrested yesterday, and it was interestingly discovered that they were all from Delhi itself and belonged to lower castes—Kahars, Ahirs and Chamars. Two such Chamars pretended to belong to a particular regiment. When, however, they were taken to the regimental headquarters, the truth was disclosed: they were beaten with shoes, and are now under arrest.

The Company government had lost hold on its domains while the rebel government had fallen a prey to anarchy. The Emperor, realizing his utter failure in controlling the state of affairs, decided to migrate to the holy cities of Mecca and Madina. The *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* writes:

> It is heard that on learning about the misery of the subjects, the injustices perpetrated by the mischief-mongers, and the near total collapse of administration, His Majesty has issued a proclamation wherein he has drawn attention to the fact that the majority of the powerful and influential people cause misery to the loyal subjects of the Emperor. The common people had earlier been the victims of the British government. His Majesty's subjects have thus always been

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victims of tyranny. If the prevailing state of affairs continues, His Majesty wrote, then he would be obliged, since he had little love for, worldly goods, to retire to Ajmer, to the shrine of the Khwaja, and the loyal subjects too would be obliged to migrate thereto. Or, he would migrate to the holy shrines of Mecca and Madina to spend the rest of his life in divine contemplation.

It is heard that the above-mentioned document had great effect on the audience when it was read out. I wish to God that the Divine Dispenser might so will things that the present anarchy comes to an end and the cause of His Majesty's worry is totally removed:

The safety of the entire Universe is in Your safety;
May your being not receive any harm.

The story of the fall of Baghdad and of how thousands and thousands of its citizens were butchered ruthlessly by barbaric hordes sounds incredible when read in books of history. Such stories are, however, clearly echoed in accounts of the mutiny contained in contemporary newspapers. As an example we may quote from the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, dated 24 May 1857:

Stray Englishmen are still coming out of their hiding and are soon despatched to death. All this is a lesson to the discerning about the ways of Providence.

A man whose face was partly covered with a piece of cloth was buying melons at a shop. There were a number of other buyers too standing there. Each one of them was eager to be the first to be served. The man with the covered face angrily blurted out in Hindustani, "Be silent." His accent was unmistakably that of an Englishman. Immediately, street urchins gathered round him. Soon he was lying on the ground. Eye-witnesses say that the Englishman was so strongly built that he could have easily crushed at least two persons to death with the weight of his body alone. It should, however, be regarded as an act of divine vengeance that he, like hundreds of his compatriots, did not have time even to lift his finger.

Sincerity and hypocrisy are complimentary qualities, and when questions of loyalty are involved it is difficult

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to say which is which. The wave of discontent and rebellion notwithstanding there certainly were a large number of Indians who were still loyal to the British. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar had been too much carried away by his enthusiasm for the rebels to tolerate people whom he considered traitors to the cause. In his editorial dated 21 May 1857 he wrote:

> We find that there still are a large number of people awed by the glory of British rule and loyal to it. Those, however, who have a deeper insight and understanding believe that the British have indeed fallen a victim to fierce divine vengeance, and also that the cause of divine displeasure is nothing but their own pride.
>
> It has often been heard that quite a large number of Hindus and Muslims are still loyal to the Christians and have thus betrayed their own faith. Such traitors are well-wishers of the British and wish to see them victorious. They give them vital information secretly. It is obligatory on the part of all Muslims and Hindus to beware of them, to learn about their activities and to bring them to book so that others might learn from their example.

Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was opposed not only to those who betrayed the cause of freedom but also to the government of the Company. This is apparent at least from the following extract in which he assumes, like most Indians at that time, the end of foreign rule from India for ever. He writes:

> Where are now Englishmen and the Friends of India ... and those eloquent sophistries about the wonderful administration and wisdom of the British? Let them see how the poor, helpless unwise Indians from cities and villages have reduced the edifice of their empire to nothing![1]

The editorial comments in *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* reveal that Maulvi Muhammad Baqar was, in those momentous days, engaged, on the one hand, in condemning the British and exposing the weaknesses of their moral culture and, on the other, in inspiring his compatriots to keep their morale high and in assuring them of final success. His writings at that time

1. Quoted in *Athara Sau Satawan Ke Akhbarat aur Dastawezen*, p. 106.

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were mainly aimed at enthusing his countrymen whole-heartedly to engage themselves in the national struggle. He refers to the opinions of a religious divine with approval:

> A *maulvi* exhorted the nobles, landlords and native rulers not to be taken in by the humility and guile of the British. Otherwise, they would themselves be responsible for their own destruction. Have they forgotten that the British had been unwilling to let them rule with freedom even their principalities? They had even tried to exterminate their religion. What treatment had they meted out to the Delhi and Oudh courts! The British are totally unreliable. The promises they make now would be completely forgotten the day they regain power. Beware—if the Hindus and Muslims of our country are deceived now, they would have to repent for ever. Repentence would then be of no avail.

The *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, dated 31 May 1857, editorially comments:

> Such is the divine vengeance against the British that even a hundred thousand maunds of gunpowder and other military relief cannot be of any avail to them in their present plight. Seers and sages tell us that who render help to the British traitors would only lose their faith without actually helping the enemy as they are divinely doomed. The Christians are not going to survive as they are victims of divine wrath.

In another issue (14 June 1857) there is a similar mixture of nationalist feeling with pseudo-religious prophecy:

> A divine believes that, in view of the prophecies contained in old religious writings, this nation (the British) is a victim of divine wrath. It is therefore necessary that the native potentates should have no fear and should remain firm in their faith in God: the British now do not possess the will or the strength to withstand the attack by the Indians. God has deprived them of their rule. It is time for our countrymen to unite and devote themselves, soul and body, to the cause of fighting the British. Comfort and luxury should now become a thing of the past. We should wholeheartedly obey the Emperor. Let us dedicate ourselves to the task of carrying out the orders of His Majesty and to that of

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fighting the enemies of our Faith. At a time like this we should be content with the blessings of God, the true Avenger.

The various issues of the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* give us glimpses of the social and economic aspects of contemporary Indian life during the days of the mutiny. The loss of life and property was reduced and a semblance of normalcy restored owing to the different measures taken by Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar out of his loving care for the welfare of the subjects. The economic order, however, was in total disarray: food became scarce and prices began to rise. We find the following in the 14 June 1857 issue of the paper:

The Sale of Goods in the City Markets

Owing to the constant patrolling of the city streets by the Kotwal and other police officers thefts and burglaries are in check; few complaints are now heard. However, the city merchants and shop-keepers have perpetrated great injustices on the common people. People experience great hardships in buying commodities of daily use. The great majority of such goods have almost disappeared from the market; the few things that are available are extremely dear. The number of shops that are open in each market can be counted on the tips of one's fingers. Such shops are overcrowded with customers; there are more buyers than goods in them. The quality of goods sold is extremely poor. Overriding necessity, however, obliges people to buy them. The mere fact that they can get them is satisfaction enough.

The following extract contains an interesting piece of information:

The lovers of good life in the city, specially the ladies, who are fond of chewing *pan zarda* are in great trouble since *pan*, as small in size as *peepal* leaf is available only at a price of Rs. 2/- in the market below *Jama Masjid*...

The *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* draws attention to the scarcity of water and the danger of epidemics that might spread owing to the insanitary condition in the city:

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Another important problem requiring the urgent attention of the administration is the fact that water-carriers (*saqqas*) have altogether stopped supplying water. This is a great hardship experienced by the people. The wealthy have their servants to supply then with water. These servants can be seen carrying earthen pitchers on their shoulders containing water for necessary chores and cooking. The sweepers (*halal khors*) have become work-shirkers (*haram khors*):

> 'How strange! The black Ethiopian is called "fair"!' They have not reported to work in many localities for many days. If such conditions continue to prevail, it will lead to the spread of epidemics. It may give to the common people another excuse for running away from the city.

Meanwhile the Company government issued a proclamation condemning the freedom struggle on theological grounds. The proclamation aimed at instigating the Muslims against the Hindus and sought to persuade them to obey British rule. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar printed this proclamation in the 5 July 1857 issue of his paper, and then followed it with a strongly-argued rebuttal. It is too long to be quoted in full; only one of his arguments is summarised below:

> The well-wishers of the Company argue that the Emperor ought to have called witnesses before rising in rebellion against the British rule. Only legitimately called witnesses in accordance with religious law could have proved that the British rule was unjust. Only such procedure could have justified the waging of a holy war against the British! This argument is based on shameless sophistry. Is this not strange that a government which could not control its own servants from rising in rebellion accuses the helpless Emperor of not being able to control his men—a destitute Emperor without men and means. Had the British allowed anything to remain in his control? Had he not already been made utterly helpless and powerless.
>
> The Emperor is also accused of not communicating to the Company government anything about the prevailing situation on the eve of the rebellion as, so they say, was his duty as an ally of the Company government. The charge is

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nothing less than fantastic since the only means of communication available to the Emperor was through the Resident in Delhi, and that gentleman had been killed in the very beginning of the upsurge! How could the Emperor have communicated anything to the Company government under such circumstances?.....

The treatment that the Company government had meted out to the Emperor and his dependents in the past has not been forgotten. Everyone remembers how the Emperor had been reduced to abject helplessness; he was not even allowed to bring anything to the notice of the Company government without prior permission!

An interesting sidelight is thrown on the contemporary political situation in the columns of the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*. We learn that the rulers of Rajputana had remained loyal to the British, had in fact helped them in many ways:

The ruler of Alwar has annexed Ferozepur. It is said that the British had instigated him to do so. The Raja of Alwar has sent help for the British in the vicinity of Agra. Besides, the representatives of the states of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur are all present before the British Resident at Mt. Abu. There have also gathered about two hundred Englishmen who would all have been killed but for the protection given by the Rajput Rajas.

There was a change in the format of the newspaper with the 28th issue; instead of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* it was now called *Akhbar-al-Zafar*. It contained an editorial from which the following extract may be given:

This newspaper is issued once a week—every Sunday in defiance of the Christian sabbath! Some Christian clergymen and a greatly prejudiced magistrate had, during the days of their rule, opposed the idea of a newspaper being issued on a Sunday since their religion prohibits them to engage in any kind of activity on Sundays. This opposition was in accordance with their policy of undermining our religious customs and practices and of promoting their own religion. God be thanked, however, that our newspaper continued to be issued on Sundays. It no doubt reveals

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God's omnipotence that the clergyman who had opposed us died soon thereafter, and the magistrate was transferred to some other place. A little later we heard that a new clergyman whose daughter was expected soon to be married to the *Bara Sahib* had taken the former's place. He too was fanatical like his predecessor. It was believed that after his daughter's marriage he would persuade the *Bara Sahib* to introduce Christian customs and practices contrary to those of Islam. He had already introduced Sunday as a holiday in the College. He was fervently opposed to the idea of any work or activity being carried on Sundays. God be thanked that even during the days of British rule his scheme could not be carried out.... It is again a proof of God's providence that the would-be son-in-law of that clergyman, the foundation of his fanatical hopes, was soon thereafter killed. A short while later that clergyman and his daughter both were despatched to hell, and victory fell to the lot of our great Emperor. Succour and relief have been coming to him from all directions as if unasked for, and his name is associated with victory (*Zafar*) right from the beginning of time. It is because of this reason that the enemies of the Faith who wished to destroy our customs have themselves been destroyed by God. None of them is alive now to prevent us from following our Faith. So have we received from His Majesty... this (new) title of *Akhbar-al-Zafar*.

The concluding part of this editorial is not without interest and reads as follows:

It is interesting to learn that the Englishmen who have escaped have managed to do so by disguising themselves as Indians, dressed in skirts (*lahngas*) and sitting in carriages. Thus disguised as women they would salute everyone they met on the way. How great indeed is the transformation in those *Sahib Bahadurs*! Once they would not cast a single glance even on the most respectable of Indians. It was a great favour if they acknowledged greetings and prostrations by just looking in the direction of the supplicants! See how providence has reduced them to this lowly condition!

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On the 9th of July 1857 General Bakht Khan presented himself in the Royal Court. Samsamuddaulah Nawab Ahmad Quli Khan Bahadur had been appointed to welcome him in the Royal presence. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar gave an ample description of the occasion in his paper and also wrote at length about the General's attainments and qualities. Here is an extract from the issue dated 12 July 1857:

> Samsamuddaulah set out to receive and welcome General Muhammad Bakht Khan Bahadur, and brought him along with his men to the Royal presence. After due courtesies the General gave an account of the prevailing situation in all the places. His Majesty was greatly pleased to hear the Khan Bahudur and bestowed on him an amount of four thousand rupees for distribution of sweets. On the same date, His Majesty also addressed him as "Commander-in Chief of all the Combat Platoons." He also issued orders to all the officers that they should remain obedient to him and follow his instructions in all matters. None should disobey him.
>
> ...(By the orders of His Majesty) the following instructions were written down for the guidance of the Commander-in-Chief: the greatest importance should be given to the destruction of the strongholds of the enemies of the Faith. Secondly, care should be taken that the soldiers who have forcibly entered the city and the Exalted Fort are obliged to go out of the walls of the city and remain there. They may also be prevented from indulging in loot and harassment of the subjects. Thirdly, early attempts may be made to disburse the salaries of old and newly-employed servants. Fourthly, improvement may be brought about in the administration of outlying *tehsils* and *thanas*, and platoons may thereto be despatched. Lastly, it has been noticed that many bad characters have disguised themselves as *tilangas*. Thus disguised they forcibly enter the houses of respectable citizens after charging them with aiding and hiding the enemies or accusing them of sending information to the enemies. Thus they harass these innocent citizens and plunder their houses. Proper punishment should be given in all such cases after due investigation.

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The editor writes the following after giving an account of the arrival in Court of the General, conferment of titles and entrusting of duties to him:

> With the appointment of the General, the problems created by the presence of soldiers in the city and the Fort have been properly solved. There had previously been a general complaint about this. Everyone is full of praise for the General. It is hoped that the administration will considerably improve when the present war is over. People are bound to get relief then. There has been considereable improvement in the despatch of the army too: there is now greater discipline and better organisation. The Commander-in-Chief seems to be a man of strong will, resourceful, religious and a well-wisher of the common people. By looking at his actions and the way he is shaping himself, one would think it a great good fortune for the army and the ordinary citizens that such a person has been appointed as the Commander-in-Chief. He has included in the Council only those officers who deserved to be there and did it all gracefully. The way he treats the subjects is also praiseworthy; he treats them according to desert. The fighting that took place this week resulted in the death of many whites. A large number of enemies were looted and killed. Many camels were acquired in the loot. One day, the supplies of the enemy were well apprehended.

After assuming charge of the army, General Bakht Khan issued a proclamation that was aimed at encouraging common people to cease helping the enemy secretly in the hope of possible future gain. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar published the proclamation in toto in his newspaper in the same issue:

Copy of the Proclamation of the General

> It is well-known to all and it is also not surprising that some people including *jagirdars*, *pensiondars* and *muafidars* in this city and outside have lost their sources of income owing to the end of the government of the infidels. Such persons might be tempted to help the enemy secretly by entering into conspiracies or by supplying it with help or information. This proclamation is issued for the information

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of such persons. They are hereby assured that after victory, and on production of valid proofs, they would be allowed to enjoy such benefits as they have traditionally done. They would also be given benefits for the duration of the period of disorder when they could not enjoy them. In case such persons continued to help the enemy by supplying it with information of helping it in any other way after this notice has been served on them, they would consequently get severe punishment. With this aim in view, orders are hereby issued to police stations that they should arrange to get this proclamation signed by the various *jagirdars*, *muafidars* and *pensiondars* in their respective areas and thereafter return it to us.

The officials and well-wishers of the Company government wanted to create rifts among the countrymen on religious grounds leading thus to disunity among their enemies. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar drew attention to these efforts and wrote:

> Now, brother countrymen and especially those who serve in the army, let us beware of these attempts to divide us—we who are united as parts of a body are united. Let us exterminate these people who think we are not united. Let us wholeheartedly put ourselves to this endeavour, and let us sacrifice all our comforts in the task of liberating ourselves from fears (that we will be hurt by our own compatriots).
>
> O brother Hindus and Muslims, we tell you again and again that all the worldly losses you suffer in your attempt to bring about the downfall of the enemies of the Faith is in fact your gain. Worldly loss is nothing as this world is nothing. It is obligatory on the part of all Hindus and Muslims to regard divine favours as more important than human.

The euphoria of the freedom struggle did not last long; soon the situation began to change. Outside the Kashmiri Gate fighting had become intensified. The Company was gaining power day by day. Inside, symptoms of a defeatist mentality were gradually increasing. The number of the well-wishers of the enemy was also gradually on the increase:

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Investigation

It is heard that certain mahajans (traders) who are well-wishers of the Christians supply information to the enemy and bring messages from outside for their supporters inside. Things should now be so arranged that the real culprits are caught near the border. This would bring the true situation to light. Punishment to a few would deter others from indulging in such activities. It is said that a large number of (Indian) Christians have started living in *qasbas* (small towns) adjoining the city.

It is unfortunate that the company of the Christians has so deeply affected some of our countrymen that Islam does not have any hold on their minds now. Quite a large number of people seem to be friendly towards the Christians though outwardly they proclaim themselves to be nationalists. The Faithful, however, soon learn to recognize them for what they are. These traitors will soon be disappointed —if God willing. The weak among the Faithful, however, have great hopes deriving from the prolongation of the hillock war.

Soon doubts began to acquire the form of certainties. The friends of the Company government could no longer hide their nefarious activities. The conspiracies began to come to light. All this ultimately led to the exposure of the man who was closest to the Emperor and who knew all the secrets. His disloyalty and betrayal was the real cause of the failure of the fighters of freedom. The 6 August 1857 issue of *Akhbar-al-Zafar* (old *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*) brings the matter to public light:

Delhi

It is heard that the Victorious Armies (of the Faithful) have fully come to know about the conspiracy between the infidel Christians and Ehtiram-al-Daulah Hakim Ehsanullah Khan Bahadur. It is said that the explosion in the ammunition store in which a few hundred people were killed on Friday was a direct result of this conspiracy. The Victorious Armies have in any case arrested the said Khan and confiscated his property.

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If, on the one hand, the distinguished and principal members of the royal court were engaged in activities aimed at helping the enemy, the royal armies were, on the other, ill-organized, undisciplined and consisting of untrained personnel. The account of the abject misery, poverty and unmanliness of the citizens of Delhi is a painful one. The pages of *Akhbar-al-Zafar* are a faithful mirror of the situation then obtaining. Very few people, complains Maulvi Muhammad Baqar, have any familiarity with the art of swordsmanship. This state of affairs has made the common people helpless and stunned the thoughtful into silence. Everyone has resigned himself to God's will. Not to speak of the gentlemanly class and the intellectuals, even the common people who are generally given to mutual fighting are unable to face the situation. They use wooden weapons when they engage in private brawls but are afraid of lifting a real sword when it comes to fighting the enemy. The reason for this might be the lethargy and inaction induced in the common people by long misrule. They have never faced real challenges. Most of them cannot stand the sight of blood. In another place Maulvi Muhammad Baqar writes:

> There is no doubt that the infidels are in a strong position near the hillock. They start a new front every night stealthily. It is the courage and stamina of our army that enables them to face the enemy night and day. Otherwise, the condition of our citizens is only too apparent. Not to speak of the sick and the old even the young, nothwithstanding the valuable swords and other weapons they carry, are in no case willing to engage themselves in a fight against the infidels. On the contrary, quite a large number of them seem well-wishers of the perverse rule of the infidels; they look unhappy to hear the news of the latter's defeat.

In still another place, the editor suggests that the reason for this cowardice might be the conditions of life prevailing then in Delhi, the people of Delhi, he thinks, are given to a life of pleasure and ease and this way of life has rendered them unfit for strenuous action.

The struggle for freedom was going on in many places in the country but, owing to a lack of central leadership, mutual differences and maladministration, a large number of heroic

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and talented persons were lost to the cause of freedom. Large quantities of arms and ammunition were also carelessly destroyed or bartered away for paltry sums. Such incidents took place even in the earlier phases of the rising. Here is an extract from the 31 May 1857 issue of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*:

> The Magazine is in a strange condition: gunpowder worth thousands of rupees is being plundered by *Gujar* zamindars. The British had collected all this with great efforts. All this material is being looted away by ordinary people in an inconceivable manner.

And a little later:

> People say that many *zamindars* have collected this gunpowder to be used in their own work of plunder. Some of it is being taken away and sold by *Chamars*. Others think it is being sent to Karnal and Meerut.

Thus it was that during the early days of the rebellion vast stores of arms and ammunition, laboriously collected by the British, were thoughlessly allowed to be destroyed. The large scale loss of material was not confined to the British alone. A single explosion in a house where gunpowder was prepared resulted not only in a huge loss of material but also in the sudden death of hundreds of men. The *Akhbar-al-Zafar* (dated 16 August 1857) contains the following account:

> ... In a spacious house in the Churiwalan locality a large number of male and female workers were engaged in the manufacture of gunpowder. They were busy at work when the whole material caught fire. All the young and old were suddenly burnt to cinders. The whole edifice collapsed due to shock. Everything was transformed beyond recognition in the conflagration.

The news is also found in *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, and in considerable detail:

News from Delhi

> Alas! to think of the incident of the burning of men and the explosion in the Magazine! The pen sheds bitter tears of sorrow, and the heart of the paper is torn asunder. The

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details of the incident are as follows: At 4 O'clock in the evening on Friday the Magazine house located in Mohalla Churiwalan suddenly caught fire owing to increased heat in the grinding stones. About twenty five maunds of gun-powder consequently exploded resulting in the death of six hundred nine workers and residents of adjoining houses. They were all burnt to cinders. Some of them were blown away in a cloud of smoke like kites and crows. It looked as if the Doomsday had arrived. The neighbours were at a loss what to do: on the one hand, they were concerned about their own safety and that of their houses; on the other, they felt pained at the plight of those partially burnt and the lamentations of the relatives of the deceased. It was an unbearably tragic scene. Many of the spectators abstained from food that day. The house continued to burn for two days though the police did its best to extinguish the fire. The survivors did not last for more than a few hours; they died the same night. Four cartloads of dead bodies were taken away by the morning; the remaining were buried in the house itself.

Apart from the discouraging conditions in the city the Company government began a campaign of intimidation outside. All this had a greatly demoralising effect on the people. Many of the supporters and well-wishers of Sultan Bahadur Shah Zafar were eliminated through unheard of tyranny. Properties were confiscated in the name of the Company government. Many populated areas were burnt to ashes. The editorial in the 23 August 1857 issue of *Akhbar-al-Zafar* tells us:

The Tyrannies of the Vicious Infidels

People coming from outside (the city) bring news that the infidel Christians are greatly harassing the common people. Their ire is mainly directed against the men of Faith (Muslims). They hang whomsoever they get held of. They indiscriminately murder people. Whole villages are destroyed. Though they cannot do anything against the Victorious Armies of the Emperor, they express their ire against the helpless common people. Recently they hanged a

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> Maulvi at Sonipat and have also harassed the Saiyyids of Gulauthi. Some say that the whole village (of the Saiyyids) was rased to the ground.

The last issue of *Akhbar-al-Zafar* came out on 13 September 1857 (23 Muharram). Thereafter, everything was completely transformed. As Gustakh Rampuri puts it:

> A round of the Cup was not less than a hundred revolutions of the Heavens;
> The world had completely changed when we came out of the tavern!

The very next day the army of the Company government victoriously entered through the gates of the city; the entire edifice of the Imperial administration suddenly collapsed. Maulvi Muhammad Baqar died a martyr's death and went to eternal rest in his heavenly abode.

This account of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar's *Akhbar-al-Zafar* (*Delhi Urdu Akhbar*) may be allowed to conclude with the following extract from the last issue (13 September 1857) of the paper:

> Fighting with guns and cannons has continued for the last four days. The infidels opened many new fronts; we also did the same. Details of this fighting may not be necessary as the newspaper cannot be sent to anyone outside the city, and those inside do not need this paper to get information. They are themselves witnesses to what we can write about.

Mazhar-al-Haq, Delhi

Maulvi Muhammad Akbar, the father of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar started another Urdu newspaper in August 1843. It was called *Mazhar-al-Haq*. It was a religious newspaper issued with the aim of defending and reforming the Shi'a sect among the Muslims. The genesis of the paper can be traced to the concern experienced by Indian Shi'as at the happenings in Bhaghdad which had resulted in large-scale loss of life and property of the Shi'as. The Sunnis of India were naturally not inclined to sympathize with the Shi'a cause.

Mazhar-al-Haq was priced at Re. 1/- per month. There is a notice about the issue in the *Siraj-al-Akhbar* of Delhi, dated

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13 September 1843. There is a suggestion in the notice that, according to a rumour in Delhi, the newspaper was believed to have been brought out by Maulvi Muhammad Baqar under the editorship of Syed Barkat Ali. The concluding words of the notice, however, contradict the suggestion. Another issue of *Siraj-al-Akhbar* (29 November 1843) makes it clear the newspaper was in fact started by Maulvi Muhammad Akbar, the father of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar. There is a letter in it from "Muhammad Akbar" which categorically states that its writer is the editor and manager of both *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* and *Mazhar-al-Haq*. The official reports pertaining to the years 1844-1848 too contain references to *Mazhar-al-Haq* but these references suggest that its editor's name was Sheikh Imdad Husain. These reports also suggest that this newspaper was the organ of the Shi'a sect of Delhi and that the proprietor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* had direct links with it. We also learn from these reports that the circulation of this newspaper was extremely limited, and that it did not make much progress during four years. It was in fact on the decline during the said period. It was feared, the reports conclude, that it would soon close down. This is exactly what happened. The paper ceased publication in 1850.

Fawaid-al-Shaiqin, Delhi

Another Urdu newspaper, *Fawaid-al-Shaiqin*, was started from the printing press of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* in 1848. It was a weekly. Official reports reveal that it was in fact the Urdu edition of the government gazette. Besides the translation of the main contents of the gazette, it also published questions and answers for the candidates preparing for the competitive examination of *munsifi*. Its circulation had gone up to a hundred copies even in the first year of its publication. The paper could not continue for long notwithstanding its large circulation. It ceased publication in 1850.

Saiyyid-al-Akhbar, Delhi

An important newspaper of considerable fame and merit was started from Delhi in 1841. The founder of this newspaper was Sayyid Muhammad Khan, the elder brother of Sir Syed

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Ahmad Khan. It was a weekly called *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, and was published under the editorship of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor. The well-known Urdu writer and biographer Maulana Hali has mentioned it in his account of *Asar-al-Sanadia* in *Hayat-e-Javed* (the biography of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan):

> At the time when he was a *munsif* in Delhi he (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan) became interested in doing research about historical monuments in and around Delhi... Sir Syed was a man of courage and large-heartedness right from the beginning. Financial stringency, however, often made him unhappy. The thought of writing the said book came to him as a possible means of earning a little money though, at the same time, he was keenly interested in the subject too. Sir Syed also thought of promoting *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, the newspaper that had been founded by his elder brother.
>
> *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* was in name looked after by another man but it was Sir Syed himself who wrote most of the articles in it. It continued to be published for a certain period before closing down.

Maulana Hali has not mentioned the year of the first issue of the paper in the above account. Most researchers, however believe that this newspaper was started in 1837 which certainly is not true. The official report for 1848 clearly mentions the paper, and in it the date of the first issue is given as 1841:

> The Sydool Ukhbar (*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*) seems to have declined between 1844 and 1848, its circulation having dropped from 50 to 27 and its receipts from Rs. 78 to Rs. 54 monthly. Started in 1841, the paper was said to be the organ of the Sunni sect. Opinion is divided on the performance of its editor, one view being that his writings were bigoted and polemical and the other being that it contained items of general interest with regular notices on the buildings of Jounpoor.[1]

Along with the newspaper, Syed Muhammad Khan also founded a lithographic printing press in 1841. This press printed not only the *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* but also the scholarly

1. Quoted from Natrajan, *A History of Indian Journalism*, p. 50.

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and poetic works of past and contemporary luminaries. In the very first year of its establishment, the press published the first edition of the Urdu compositions of Mirza Ghalib. The title-page of this edition of the Diwan reads: "Printed under the care of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor/ in the month of Sha'ban 1257 A.H. (1841 A.D.)/ at the lithographic Press of Saiyyid Muhammad Khan Bahadur/ the Diwan of Asadullah Khan Bahadur with the poetic name of 'Ghalib'/ popularly known as Mirza Naushah."

Among the important publications of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, two were first published at the lithographic press of *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*: *Jila'-al-Qulub-b-Zikr-al-Mahbub* and *Fawaid-al-Afkar fi A'mal-al-Farjar*. The print-line in the former reads: "*Jila'-al-Qulub-b-Zikr-al-Mahbub*, the work of Jawad-al-Daulah Saiyyid Ahmad Khan Bahadur 'Arif Jang, printed in Delhi under the supervision of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor at the Lithographic Press of Saiyyid Muhammad Khan in the month of Ramadhan, 1259 A.H." This statement makes it clear that the press was still (in 1843) known as "the Lithographic Press." The case, however, is different in the later of the two books: "Printed at Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, under the supervision of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor in 1846 A.D." This makes it clear that by 1846 the name of the Press had been changed to Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*. Saiyyid Muhammad Khan, the elder brother of Sir Syed died in 1845. It is likely that Sir Syed changed the name of the Press soon after his brother's death. *Asar-al-Sanadid*, the famous archaeological work by Sir Syed, was also printed at the same Press, and there too the Press is called "Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*" and not the "Lithographic Press." This work was first published in 1847. The title-page of still another work by Sir Syed reads: *Qaul-e-Matin dar Ibtal-e-Harakat-e-Zamin*, written by Syed Ahmad Khan, Munsif Shahjehanabad, printed at Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, under the supervision of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor, 1265 A.H."

Atiq Siddiqui has also mentioned the Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, and expressed his opinion in the following words: "Syed Ahmad Khan had published the first edition of *Asar-al-Sanadid* from this press in 1847. The name of the press on the book itself, however, is given as "Saiyyid-al-Matabe'." This is

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most probably based on a misunderstanding as the title-page carries the name of the press as "Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*" and not "Saiyyid-al-Matabe'."

Although the Press had been founded by Saiyyid Muhammad Khan, neither he nor Sir Syed were actually responsible for its management. Right from its establishment in 1841 as "the Lithographic Press" to its closure as "Matba'-e-*Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*" in 1849, it was looked after by Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor whose name is always mentioned as its supervisor and manager.

The Question of the Editorship of "Saiyyid-al-Akhbar"

As has already been pointed out earlier, the name of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor was always printed as the editor of *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* right from its inception in 1841. Saiyyid Muhammad Khan himself appeared in the competitive examination of *munsifi*, was selected and appointed as *munsif* at Hatgam in the district of Fatehpur. He continued to serve as munsif till the concluding months of 1845.[7] On his return to Delhi during the Dussehra vacations he fell ill and died a few months later. During all this period his younger brother, Sir Syed, too had been away from Delhi. Maulana Hali writes in *Hayat-e-Javed*:

> The *munsifi* of Mainpuri fell vacant in December 1841, and on 24 December Sir Syed was appointed as *Munsif*. He was, however, transferred to Fatehpur Sikri on 10 July 1842. He was again transferred to Delhi on 18 February 1846. It was around this time that his elder brother died in the prime of his life. His mother was naturally greatly shaken by the tragedy. His last posting (at Delhi) was therefore made at his own request. He remained in Delhi till he was permanently appointed as Sadr Amin, i.e. from 1846 to 1854.

All this makes it clear that at least till the time he was transferred to Delhi in 1846, Sir Syed had little to do with *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*. Saiyyid Muhammad Khan too had only tenuous links with the newspaper. The burden of the responsibility of looking after the paper and doing supervisory work must naturally have fallen on the shoulders of the man whose name was printed as its editor. The official report for the year

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1848 also mentions the name of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor as its editor.

A scrutiny of the official report also reveals the fact that the paper was constantly on the decline after 1844. Even the presence of Sir Syed in Delhi could not be of much help to it, and it ceased publication in 1849. In the light of all this, the statement of Maulana Hali suggesting that *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* was an important source of income for Sir Syed seems doubtful. Sir Syed was in fact more devoted to the archaeological researches connected with *Asar-al-Sanadid* and to his duties as *Munsif* than to the promotion of *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*. The newspaper, therefore, could not survive difficult circumstances, and finally ceased publication in 1849. And with that came the end of the printing press, too.

The graphic and detailed account given by Maulana Hali in *Hayat-e-Javed* of Sir Syed's strenuous efforts in connection with the writing of *Asar-al-Sanadid* established it beyond doubt that all his energies were directed towards it, and he must have had little time left for the newspaper. He was able to do basic archaeological research, consult histories and chronicles and write a lengthy book during the short span of one and a half year. This in itself is a remarkable achievement. To believe therefore that Sir Syed could have found time and energy during the same period for editing a weekly newspaper seems humanly impossible. It is reasonable to conclude that the newspaper ceased publication owing to the extraordinary preoccupations of Sir Syed during the period and his consequent neglect of it.

The second edition of *Asar-al-Sanadid* was published from Matba'-e-Sultani in 1854. Maulana Hali has referred to this edition, and in this connection has brought an interesting fact to light:

> This edition was ready for publication in 1854. Neither this nor the earlier edition of 1847 proved financially profitable to Sir Syed. All the copies of the second edition were lost during the Mutiny. The first edition did not prove profitable owing to the betrayal of faith by the man who was responsible for its printing.

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We learn from the first edition that it had been printed under the supervision of Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor. The guess is not unreasonable that the man who betrayed Sir Syed's trust was this same person, and that probably was the reason why Sir Syed could not carry on with him.

It is necessary to remove a misunderstanding here. Atiq Siddiqui has written the following under the heading "Dam-al-Akhwan":

> Now (that is, after the death of Saiyyid Muhammad Khan) the entire responsibility of the newspaper fell on the shoulders of Sir Syed. That he had been closely associated with the newspaper even during the lifetime of his elder brother is suggested by the tradition that the people of Delhi had nicknamed the *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* as "dam-al-akhwan." This shows that both the brothers used to take keen interest in the newspaper.

This surmise, however, is not correct. Mr. Siddiqui's main source is *Hayat-e-Javed*, and therein Hali writes the following under the heading "dam-al-akhwan":

> It was at that time that he (Sir Syed) prepared a summary of civil laws relating to *munsifi* in order to qualify himself for the post of *Munsif*. The Commissioner forwarded that summary to higher authorities and recommended his name for the post. Meanwhile, however, new regulations relating to recruitment to the post of *Munsif* came into force, and Sir Syed was now advised to make preparations for the competitive examination. Not only did Sir Syed begin the preparations himself but also encouraged his elder brother, Saiyyid Muhammad Khan and his cousin Hatim Ali Khan to do the same. Since Saiyyid Mohammad Khan had studied law for the first time he could not qualify in the first attempt. Syed Ahmad and Hatim Ali Khan both, however, succeeded in the very first attempt and received diplomas. Sir Syed now published the summary of civil laws which he had prepared earlier, and included the name of his brother too as its co-author. He called it *Intikhab-al-Akhwain* which soon came to be nicknamed as *Dam-al-Akhwain* by some contemporary wags.

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Siraj-al-Akhbar, Delhi

Siraj-al-Akhbar is the first Persian newspaper to come out of Delhi. It began publication on 30 July 1841. It may in fact be regarded as a royal circular which contained an account of the daily engagements of the Emperor besides news from other states and places outside Delhi. Apart from local news it also published weather information of general interest. This newspaper was published from Matba`-e-Sultani under the supervision of Muslehuddaulah Saiyyid Abul Qasim Khan, Chronicler Royal, and Imdad Ali Beg Khan.

Mr. Natrajan has given a brief account of the newspaper in his *History of Indian Journalism*. He has also quoted the following account of the paper given by John Lawrence, a Delhi magistrate:

> The Siraj-al-Akhbar, the King's paper, is published in the palace. All persons connected with it are royal servants. Only 34 copies are printed once a week (Sunday) and distributed among the King's followers for the most part but one copy is sent to the Governor-General, one to the Lt. Governor and one to the Officer commanding the palace guards. One rupee is retrenched from the pay of each person to support the paper. It is written in elegant but inflated Persian and has little in it beyond news of the palace and the King in particular when he sleeps, eats, drinks, goes out, comes in and the like. It is hardly known beyond the precincts of the palace.

The above is confirmed from the official report relating to 1848. It is necessary to remove a misunderstanding about the editorship of the paper. Atiq Siddiqui writes:

> Bahadur Shah Zafar had lost the substance of royal power but its semblance still remained. As a part of the paraphernalia of royalty there still was the post Chronicler Royal. Muslehuddin (sic) Saiyyid Abul Qasim was the last Chronicler Royal of the Mughal Empire. It was under his supervision that the newspaper was published. The editor was Syed Aulad Ali.

Siddiqui does not seem to be correct in regarding Saiyyid Aulad Ali as the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*. He has also called

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Muslehuddaulah Abul Qasim Khan only as Chronicler Royal. In fact, Muslehuddaulah Abul Qasim Khan was both the editor of the newspaper and the Chronicler Royal. Saiyyid Aulad Ali was actually the editor of *Aina-e-Geti Numa*, and occasionally wrote improper things about Muslehuddaulah. The question of the editorship of *Siraj-al-Akhbar* is settled by its printline which reads: "Printed at Matba'-e-Sultani under the supervision of Muslehuddaulah Abul Qasim Khan." In some early issues of 1841 the printline is: "Printed at Matba'-e-Sultani under the supervision of Muslehuddaulah Saiyyid Abul Qasim Khan Bahadur, the manager, of the press, and Imdad Ali Beg." The printline of the issue of 6 March 1844 also mentions the name of Qari Masood as the paper's calligrapher. There is no doubt, therefore, that the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar* was not Saiyyid Aulad Ali but Muslehuddaulah (not Muslehuddin, as mentioned by Siddiqui) Abul Qasim Khan.

Siraj-al-Akhbar was a weekly which was printed on eight pages of 12″×8″ size. Each page was divided into two columns of 25 lines each. The top-most part of the first page contained the names of the newspaper, and below it were given the dates according to both the Christian and Hijra Calendars. The first column contained the datewise engagements of the Emperor under the heading "News of the Court of..." followed by His Majesty's titles. This diary of engagements consisted of about five pages. The remaining pages contained foreign and local news and some information about the weather. Contrary to what John Lawrence wrote about the paper's language, its style was simple and straightforward.

Some interesting items in the paper throw light on the Emperor's relations with the Poet Laureate, Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim 'Zauq'. We learn, for instance that even the son of 'Zauq' was in the employment of the Emperor. His name was Sheikh Muhammad Ismail Khan, and he had been given the title of Viqaruddaulah. It was because of the great spiritual kinship between the Emperor and 'Zauq' that the latter's son was often the recipient of royal favours. An interesting side-light is thrown on contemporary literary history in a reference to Faqir Muhammad Khan 'Goya', the great grand-father of the well-known Urdu poet 'Josh' Malihabadi (4 October 1843).

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In the 25 October 1843 issue there are references to maladministration, social corruption and rowdyism prevalent at Lucknow at that time. The range of news in the paper was quite extensive as is indicated by the fact that in the 20 December 1843 issue of the paper there is a news about the British Museum, London. The readers are told that such a collection of books is not to be found anywhere else in the world. It erroneously ascribes the ownership of the British Museum to the East India Company. Approximate number of book is mentioned in the news item. An item of local news gives us information about the weather in Delhi: This year the summar is so hot in Delhi that even by writing about it the tongue of the pen is blistered. Dust storms come almost every other day. Children and grown-ups both suffer from diseases like small pox, fever and cholera.

Apart from news the paper also occasionally published *ghazals* and *qasidahs*. In the 5 July 1843 issue of the paper there is an Urdu *ghazal* by Emperor Bahadur Shah 'Zafar'. The *maqta'* (concluding couplet) of this *ghazal* may be translated thus:

What, O 'Zafar', have you to do with courtesies and comforts in your state of poverty:
It is not proper for a beggar to carry a bag made of *harir*.

There are references to the following contemporary newspapers and Journals in *Siraj-al-Akhbar: Majma'-al Akhbar* (Bombay), *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* (Agra), *Sultan-al-Akhbar* (Calcutta), *Jame'-al-Akhar* (Madras), *Calcutta Star* (Calcutta), *Delhi Gazette* (Delhi), *Gulshan-e-Naubahar* (Calcutta), *Bengal Harkaru* (Calcutta), *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* (Delhi), *Mazhar-al Haq* (Delhi), *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* (Delhi), *Akhbar Aina-e-Geti Numa* (Delhi), *Gentleman's Gazette*, etc.

Siraj-al-Akhbar continued to be published till the end of Mutiny. The end came with the end of the Mughal Empire.

Akhbar Aina-e-Geti Numa, Delhi

Aina-e-Geti Numa started publication from Delhi in 1841. It was edited by Saiyyid Aulad Ali, and two noblemen of Delhi were among its chief patrons. Since Saiyyid Aulad Ali was no less dynamic a journalist than Maulvi Muhammad Akbar,

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conflict between the two was inevitable. Not content with this, the Saiyyid would indulge in scurrilous attacks on other journalists also and write improper things about them. As his controversial wrangles with *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* were going on, he made a scurrilous attack on the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*. As Saiyyid Abul Qasim, the editor of *Siraj-al-Akhbar*, was a peace-loving and kindly person, he not only kept quiet himself but stopped his disciples too from making any rejoinders. Maulvi Muhammad Akbar, the editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, was not, however, a man to let such an opportunity pass; immediately he wrote a letter to the editor and sent it to *Siraj-al-Akhbar* for publication. Saiyyid Abul Qasim was not at first willing to let it be published but was soon prevailed upon by the Maulvi. Grudgingly he allowed it to be published, but added a note to the Maulvi's letter. It was entitled "A Plea from the Chronicler Royal to Men of Understanding." He pointed out in this note that it was against his will that he allowed the above letter to be published. He did not want to hurt the feelings of the writer of the letter. Those who are close to him (the writer of this note), however, know that he would be the last person to share the sentiments expressed in this letter or to have had a hand in its writing. The note ended with the following couplet:

No one knows anything about my mind;
What should I say to my friends.

Another incident of mutual journalistic bickering involved Saiyyid Muhammad Khan, the owner of *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*. Once, Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor, the editor of *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar*, included in his paper an item from *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* which was in fact a provocative attack on Saiyyid Aulad Ali. The latter naturally felt greatly concerned believing *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* too to be a party to the attack on him. It led him to make a counter-attack on Syed Muhammad Khan and his newspaper in *Aina-e-Geti Numa*. Saiyyid Muhammad Khan shunned controversies of this nature, and so he approached Saiyyid Abul Qasim and persuaded him to publish a long note extenuating him (Saiyyid Muhammad Khan) of any complicity in the attack on Saiyyid Aulad Ali. Saiyyid Abul Qasim pointed out in the note that Saiyyid Muhammad Khan was a

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man of gentle birth and a man of parts. He was at a loss to understand in what way Saiyyid Abdul Ghafoor had offended Saiyyid Aulad Ali in that the former had only copied something from Delhi *Urdu Akhbar*. The *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* has not in any way deliberately offended Saiyyid Aulad Ali nor does it wish to do so in future.

Sadiq-al-Akhbar, Delhi

A number of newspapers entitled *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* were published from Delhi before 1857. Maulvi Abdul Razaq Rashid Hyderabadi too has mentioned a paper with the same title in his learned article.[1] He has also pointed out that in the beginning it was published in Persian though later it changed its medium to Urdu. He has quoted the following from a note in *Ahsan-al-Akhbar*, Bombay (22 October 1847):

> The editor of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* has gradually changed his newspaper into an Urdu newspaper. We fail to understand why he has broken links with the Persian language. Perhaps he has been obliged to do so because of his subscribers' insistence to change the medium to Urdu. It is difficult to think of any other reason than this.

It is not possible to say with any certainty at what time this *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was first issued. Maulvi Abdul Razaq has suggested 1844 or 1845 as the possible year of its first issue.

Another *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was established by Mustafa Khan, the owner of Matba'-e-Mustafai, in 1851. A royal order obliged the local printing presses at Lucknow to close down in 1849. Mustafa Khan shifted his press, Matba-e-Mustafai from Lucknow to Kanpur. The change of place did not at all adversely affect the quality of its work or its cheap cost. The press continued to flourish at Kanpur, and the fact was noted in official reports. Mustafa Khan, however, was not content with his success, and soon he established a branch in Delhi also. It was here that he founded *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* in 1851. Garcin de Tassy, however, writes that it was started in 1853:

> *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* is issued by Mustafa Khan, the manager of Mustafai Press. The press was earlier located at Lucknow

1. *Urdu* (October 1935), p. 707.

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but owing to certain reasons it was closed down there. Thereafter. Mustafa Khan established two branches of the press—one at Kanpur and the other in Delhi. This newspaper is published from Delhi.

This statement of Garcin de Tassy about the year of the newspaper's first issue is, however, contradicted by the details of publication of two books as copied in the margin of Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui's work *The Newspapers and Publications of the North-Western Province.* The marginal notes conclusively prove that *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was first issued in 1851. The notes read as follows:

1. Mukhammas *Jogan Namah* by Ahmad Yar Khan 'Sharar', resident of Shahjehanabad. Printed at Matba-e-Mustafai, *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, Shahjehanabad, Shawwal 1268 A.H.
2. *Qissa-e-Siyah Posh* and Mathnavi *Soz-e-Jigar.* 1268 A.H. Printed at Matba-e-Mustafai, *Sadiq-al Akhbar* in the Capital Shahjehanabad.....

Since all the standard calendar conversion tables suggest that 1 Shawwal 1268 A.H. was 16 July 1851, it is indisputably proved that not the Press but also the newspaper published by it existed in 1851. It would therefore be reasonable to believe that *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was first issued in 1851 or at least that it existed in that year. The official report for 1853 says:

Sadiq-al-Akhbar is published from Matba-e-Mustafai, Delhi. If circulation may be regarded as an index of popularity then *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* most certainly is not a popular newspaper. Its subscribers are as follows:

Hindus	*Muslims*	*Europeans*	*Total*
1	3	7	11

The editor of the newspaper is also the proprietor of Matba-e-Mustafai. He is a big trader of books. He has established agencies for the sale of books in many places, and his books are in demand in innumerable circles.[1]

In the list of newspapers for the year 1853 as given in Siddiqui's book (*Subah-e-Shumal Wa Maghrabi Ke Akhbarat*

1. Quoted from *Suba-e-Shumali wa Maghrabi Ke Akhbarat wa Matbu'at*, p. 166.

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Wa Matbu'at) the name of the editor of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* is given as Mustafa Khan. The official report for 1854, however, records the name of one Muhammad Husain as its editor. (Incidentally, the column showing the circulation is left blank). It may be noted that the list of publications for 1853 in Siddiqui's book contains the title of two *mathnavis* which were printed as one volume. The statement on the title-page reads:

> The work of Sa'adat Yar Khan 'Rangeen' known as *Charbagh*, and another original *mathnavi* by Maulvi Abul Hasan known as *Khanjar-e-'Ishq*. Published according to the request of Hafiz Muhammad Nizamuddin, merchant of Kol (Aligarh) and printed by Muhammad Husain Khan at Matba'-e-Mustafai in 1268 A.H.

We learn from the above that Muhammad Husain Khan was the Manager of Matba'-e-Mustafai in 1851. The same gentleman was probably the editor of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* in 1854. Garcin de Tassy has mentioned the paper in his lecture for 1855 which proves its existence in 1854.

We have evidence of one or two other newspapers with the same title published from Delhi. A *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was edited by Jamiluddin Khan 'Hijr' who was earlier associated with Matba'-e-Mustafai as a calligrapher. He must have been a gifted man for soon he started on his own and established a printing press known as Jamil-al-Matabe' in Jamil Pura or Churiwalan. In the middle of 1854 he started a newspaper called *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*. In this connection it is important to remember that the *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* of Mustafa Khan must have ceased publication round about the same time. Purely on the basis of circumstantial evidence it is difficult to say whether the ownership of the earlier *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* was transferred to Jamiluddin Khan or the latter's was an entirely new venture. In any case it is quite likely that Jamiluddin Khan started his own *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* with the consent and advice of Mustafa Khan after the latter's paper had finally abandoned publication. There is hardly any contemporary evidence for these surmises; only one thing, however, is certain: that one *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* ceased publication in 1854 and another started publication in the same year.

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There is another important discovery made about *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* by Atiq Siddiqui. It is suggested that there was still another *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* besides the two just mentioned. Let us put it in Siddiqui's own words:

> It may apparently seem strange but it is a fact that two newspapers with the same title (*Sadiq-al-Akhbar*) were published from Delhi at the same time. A single issue of the first and thirteen issues of the second are preserved in the National Archives. The following dates and issue numbers are printed on two of these copies:
>
> 1. *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, Vol. 3, No. 13, 23 March 1857.
> 2. *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 16 March 1857.
>
> Calculations would suggest that the first of these two newspapers must have started publication in the first week of January 1854. The editor and proprietor of this paper was Saiyyid Jamiluddin Khan, and it was published from Jamil Pura alias Churiwalan. The other *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* only one copy of which is preserved in the National Archives, must have started publication in January 1856. Its editor was Sheikh Khuda Bakhsh.
>
> Siddiqui's calculations, however, are not correct. The first of the two *Sadiq-al-Akhbars* must have started publication in July 1854 and not January 1854. This can be stated on the basis of the calculations from the following publication data in one of the issues of the *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* owned by Jamiluddin Khan:
>
> No. 5, 2 Zil Hij 1273 A.H./13 Sawan 1914 Bikrami, Vol. 4.
>
> A reference to standard conversion tables would suggest that the first issue of the fourth volume must have been published on 13 Zi Qa'd 1273 A.H. or 6 July 1857 and the first issue of the first volume must consequently have been published in July 1854.

It would not be correct to suggest that the two newspapers with the same title were owned by the same person—Jamiluddin Khan. In fact there were three newspapers with the title of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* that were published from Delhi at the same time.

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Jamiluddin Khan had started his career as a mere calligrapher but soon he proved his mettle as a journalist. He was a man of some insight and could influence public opinion. He was inspired by patriotic and nationalistic feeling and sided with Bahadur Shah Zafar during the freedom struggle. He was arrested and served a term of imprisonment after the mutiny had been crushed. The following extract from the legal proceedings in the trial of Bahadur Shah Zafar after the mutiny gives us clear indication of the role played by *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* of Jamiluddin Khan. It also throws light on the quality and circulation of newspaper. The witness examined in the cross-examination was one Chunni Lal:

Question: Were there in Delhi (during the days of the mutiny) newspapers whose general tenour was hostile to the British government?

Answer: Yes, there was one such newspaper. Its editor was one Jamiluddin. Its contents were generally opposed to the government. Its name was *Sadiq-al-Akhbar.*

Question: Did it have a large circulation? Was it a printed newspaper?

Answer: Its circulation within and outside the city was about two hundred, and it was printed at a litho press.

Question: Was it a weekly? Did it publish supplements on special occasions?

Answer: Yes, it published supplements whenever there was some special or important news.

Question: Among which classes of society and what individuals was the newspaper more popular?

Answer: Among all educated classes. Without religious or communal distinctions.

Question: Two hundred copies seem too few for a large city such as Delhi. Is it a common practice among the natives for a subscriber to circulate his copy among his relatives and friends? Does a large number of people come to a subscriber's house to read the newspaper? Is a single copy enough for a number of families?

Answer: Yes. It is customary for a subscriber to send his copy to his relatives and friends.

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Question: Was *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* a big newspaper? Was its circulation larger than that of other newspapers?

Answer: Yes. It was the biggest Delhi newspaper. The quality of its writings was better than that of others. It published selected extracts from English newspapers. No doubt, most of its news were of greater interest to Muslims. I am not quite sure if it sold better than other newspapers.[1]

The above extract is fully confirmed by the contents of the extant issues. Even the print-line would be of interest to us in this connection:

1. Printed by Saiyyid Jamiluddin in compliance with the orders of His Majesty at Jamil-al-Matabe'. (Vol. 4, No. 1).
2. Printed by Jamiluddin Khan at Matba'-e-Jamil-al-Matabe' in compliance with the *Firman* of the Emperor. (Vol. 4, No. 3).
3. Printed by Saiyyid Jamiluddin, manager at Jamil-al-Matabe' according to the Royal *Firman* Worthy of Compliance.

The six early issues of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* have been reprinted in *Atharah Sau Sattawan Ke Akhbarat wa Dastawezen*. As has already been indicated it was a weekly newspaper, printed every Monday. The subscription rate was Re. 1/- per month. Some other details as given in the 'Advertisement" are as follows: Any one intending to become a subscriber had to send in an application addressed to Saiyyid Jamiluddin, owner and manager of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, Muhallah Jamil Pura alias Churiwalan. News and other writings of public interest would be printed gratis. Special items or advertisements would be charged at the rate of two annas per line. Writers were asked to send in details of residential address on a paper with their signatures and seals. Outstanding dues were kindly to be immediately cleared, etc. etc.

Sadiq-al-Akhbar being an important Delhi newspaper it would be worthwhile to try to give some idea of its quality and content. There is little doubt that its editor and owner, Saiyyid

1. *Muqaddamah-e-Bahadur Shah Zafar*, pp. 70-72.

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Jamiluddin, was a man of courage. Even before the struggle for freedom had started, he championed the causes of the oppressed with a crusading zeal. In the issue dated 16 March 1857, the *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* published an item that sought to expose the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Maharaja of Kashmir. Here is an extract:

The Tyranny in Kashmir

> A correspondent of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* from Murree writes that Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir has become greatly tyrannical in his domain. He has imposed taxes on almost everything. The subjects have to pay a tax whenever there is a celebration in the royal family—a birth, recovery from illness, a wedding or the *janev* ceremony. The rate of the tax is eight annas per head if a daughter is born, and ten annas if a son is born. Other forms of oppression are too heinous to be described in words. The royal officials are even a step ahead of the Maharajah in their tyrannical acts: if the Maharajah asks them to arrest a man, they cut off his head. Most of the meaner sort of artisan classes have had to pay taxes; now even prostitutes are taxed. People are blinded for failure to pay taxes. All this has caused the subjects to run away from the Maharajah's domain to different parts of the Punjab.

The beginnings of the national war of independence can be traced from various news items in *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*. Here is one about discontent and rebellion among the army men stationed at Ambala:

> Our contemporary *Friend of India* writes that armymen here are beginning to refuse the use of new cartridges. This had already happened in the region of Bengal a little earlier: certain platoons had disobeyed orders to use a new type of cartridges. One of them was discharged from service and its officers were hanged. Today we have telegraphically learnt that Gorkha platoon No. 16 stationed at Ambala has also refused to use these new cartridges...A letter from Sialkot informs us that there too the soldiers are not willing to use new type of cartridges. They use hands rather than teeth to

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cut them open. Doubts have not entirely disappeared from their minds. (*Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, 20 April 1857).

A long news item in the issue dated 6 July 1857 tells us about Delhi in the early stages of the rising:

News from Delhi

These days the city of Delhi which has for long been known as a place of Desolation is humming with life and activity. It is full of soldiers and armymen. Gone is the fear of bombbardment and shelling by the enemy. Thousands throng the streets of Delhi in the mornings and evenings. Look at the providence of God that only five angelic Turks destroyed British rule from India on the 16th of Ramadan 1273 A.H. and helped His Majesty assume imperial powers anew. Afterwards, the Emperor whose greatest concern is the welfare of his subjects appointed General Muhammad Bakht Khan Sahib Bahadur, a man who has no equal in administrative acumen, as his deputy and our kind ruler. Immediately on receiving the *Khil'at* and sword from His Majesty, the General put the administration of the city into perfect order. Nobody now tyrannizes over others. People now have respect even for the poor because they too wear swords. Discipline in the army too has considerably improved. All the police officers in the city and Saiyyid Mubarak Shah Khan, the city Kotwal, are busy taking rounds in, and patrolling the city. Shops are open, and supplies of grain from outside are plentiful. And now a word about the state of hostilities: the day before yesterday, the whites had been encircled by the General taking the route via Alipur. The fighting began, and the royal forces proved their mettle. The whites left the field soon afterwards. The victorious Army of the Emperor returned with three hundred horses and a few cartloads of supplies left behind by the enemy. It is said that a very large number of whites were killed in the fighting.

Another news item (dated 27 July 1857) informs us about rebellion at Lucknow. A person coming to a friend from Allahabad, *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* tells its readers, has brought the news that the army units at Lucknow have risen in rebellion

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against the British and put all of them to death. For the time being they have given their allegiance to Nana Sahib at Kanpur but soon they intend coming to Delhi to offer their total allegiance to the Emperor. All this information is also confirmed from other sources. These Lucknow units are expected in Delhi in the near future.

A poem published in one of the issues reflects the dominant mood created by the momentous events of 1857:

He it is who gives greatness to the rulers of the world;
He truly is the Giver of royalty to emperors.

He can endow royal power on beggars,
He can give strength and power to the weak.

Strength can He confer on weaklings,
And the mighty He brings to utter ruin.

The poem is followed by a long reflective essay on the rise and fall of empires with particular reference to the downfall of the British that then seemed virtually complete. Such reflective pieces could well have been the beginning of a kind of periodical essay in Urdu but they did not initiate any such process for reasons that need not be discussed here. The editorial reflections on the fall of the British are contained in the following extract:

Change is the essence of life. Existence is ephemeral, no more substantial than the appearance of a bubble. It is not wisdom to be proud of transitory grandeur or to run after meaningless glory. Jamshid and Faridun were brought to dust by the whirligig of time; many an edifice of glory has been rased to the ground in the twinkling of an eye. The world-conquering Alexander and the great potentate Darius were brought to nought by heavenly revolutions. Khusro and Kaikaus, emperors of exalted glory, have been drowned in the sea of oblivion. Great armies have been of no avail in the time of adversity. Man, proud man, is intoxicated by the wine of ignorance; the moment he opens his eyes he finds that existence is no more than a gust of wind:

The world is a strangely infirm place,
There is nothing in this world that lasts.

Consider the greatness of the British. At the time when God had given them power they would annex country after

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country and domain after domain. They would do so without effort. Kings and emperors would sue for peace the moment they moved in their direction. If anyone anywhere was foolish enough to challenge their power, he soon repented his folly. The British would just throw a few shells, and he would immediately supplicate for peace on bent knees. Nobody then could have imagined that any army would ever be able to defeat them or deprive them of hegemony anywhere..... The well-wishers of the Christians do not seem to have any knowledge of history, otherwise they would have learnt that the world does not favour anyone forever. One who exists also ceases to exist. God now seems to favour the Indians in that He has caused their own armies to rise in rebellion against the British. If the Indians had not been favoured in this manner, they would have had further proof of the malice and duplicity of the British. Moreover, history shows that armies have on many occasions asserted their will in choosing Kings. Besides, let us recall who it was that allowed the British to set their foot in our country in the first instance? Which royal dynasty was it that gave them trading rights here? Over the years they acquired power and became arrogant. God, however, is just and all-powerful. He has again given power to him whom He considers to be deserving of it. He has, in His almighty wisdom, changed the people's hearts in his favour. God has sent supplies and armies to our Emperor and caused the soldiers of the British to rise in rebellion against them and to put them to death. And then it happened that the whites came together again from here and there. They made an all-out effort to re-conquer Delhi. Their bravery and courage, however, were of no avail; no wisdom could prevail against destiny. These infidels were everywhere mowed down like grass. The few that remain in the field at Alipur would soon be brushed away by the broom of Divine wrath. We would soon hear that the armies of His Majesty have established their hold over the whole of the country.

(*Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, 3 August 1857)

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During the freedom struggle of 1857 Jamiluddin Khan applied to His Majesty for permission to bring out another newspaper. The royal permission was granted along with some advice that throws light on the Emperor's sense of justice and concern for the welfare of the subjects. In the royal order granting permission it was expressly stated that care had to be taken to publish news truthfully and that nothing therein was to be published that adversely reflected on any respectable citizen. It is not known if any use was made of this royal favour since there is no evidence of a second newspaper brought out by Jamiluddin Khan. One thing, however, is certain: he was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment for having championed the cause of national freedom through the columns of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* during those eventful months from May to September 1857.

Sadiq-al-Akhbar, Delhi

In January 1856 still another newspaper with the same title (*Sadiq-al-Akhbar)* was issued from Delhi. It was published under the supervision of Saiyyid Abdul Qadir. Its managing editor was Sheikh Khuda Bakhsh. It was a weekly published every Thursday and consisted of eight pages. It was printed at Matba'-e-Qadri. The subscription rate was Re. 1/- per month and Rs. 9/- annually. The "Advertisement" printed on the front page informed the readers that writings of public interest would be published free of charge but otherwise the rate was two annas per line. Books of all kinds, the Advertisement continued, could be had from the newspaper office at reasonable prices. This was immediately followed by an advertisement publicising a new, cheaper, edition of the great Persian classic of prose, *Akhlaq-e-Nasiri*. Some portion of this advertisement may be given below for its quaint flavour as also to indicate the trend in book publication common at that time:

Akhlaq-e-Nasiri

How can we describe the countless qualities of *Akhlaq*
It can change the mind into a book of morals.
Morality is worship for angelic souls,
Always keep in sight the book of *Akhlaq*.

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> Let truth shine on the minds of the champions in the play-field of morals that the book *Akhlaq-e-Nasiri* is one that can give countless advantages. The multitudes understand not owing to their shallowness but those with insight know its great value. The select of the assembly of the wise know it to be the centre of the sphere of morals. Each letter in it reveals the purity of its contents, and every word herein brims with advantage. The diction in it is so authentic and excellent that pearls worthy of Kings lose brilliance in its presence. Its language has such a flow that a smooth-running river seems a turbulent wave in comparison. Necessary it is for man that he keep this book full of advantage open before him everyday. He should derive from it eternal advantage. Since this book was scarce, and it was intended that it should be available to everyone, it was printed at Matba'-e-Husaini in Kaghazi Muhalla on the request of Mir Muhammad Nasir, bookseller, and under the supervision of Mian Muhammad Husain. It was not available for less than four rupees when it was earlier printed at Calcutta. It is now priced at Rs. 2/- per copy in public interest. It has nearly been sold out. For commercial terms please write to the manager.
>
> (*Sadiq-e-Akhbar*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 16 March 1857)

Conditions were disturbed and people's mind were greatly agitated long before the events of the great rebellion in 1857. Rumours were rife and there was a strange and inexplicable air of expectancy throughout the country. People were waiting for the great deliverance. They were expecting a Messiah to come and give them their long-awaited liberation from foreign tyrannical rule. The actual events started taking place in May 1857 but indications and shadows of the coming events began to appear long before that time. The following extract from *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, dated 16 March 1857, shows how people's mood, particularly their desire for change, was reflected in the strange rumours that were intentionally or unintentionally spread at that time. Here is the extract entitled "Advertisement from the Shah of Iran":

> An advertisement from the so-called Shah of Iran has appeared in the streets of Delhi. One of our friends brought

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this advertisement to us after copying it out from the back wall of the Jama' Masjid. Many people have seen this advertisement. It enjoins upon the Muslims the duty of not co-operating with the Christians in any way and to work hard for the well-being of their own co-religionists. Thereafter the advertisement goes on to inform the people that very soon the Emperor of Iran would come to India to bring happiness to the life of its Emperor and people. He would bring comfort to their lives just as the British have reduced them to penury. In the end "Emperor of Iran" informed the people of India that he would not interfere with anyone's religion. This then was the substance of the said advertisement. The author of this advertisement is one Muhammad Siddiq Khan. He further writes that nine hundred Iranian soldiers with their officers had already entered the country by the 9th of March. Moreover, five hundred Iranian soldiers were already present in Delhi though they could not be recognised as they were in disguise. The humble scribe of the above advertisement, Muhammad Siddiq Khan, arrived in Delhi on the 4th of March and issued the advertisement. He has access, so he says, to all the news in this country and he regularly sends information to the Shah of Iran. He would give to the people here through similar advertisements all the important information regarding the departure of soldiers from India and their arrival here and whatever else is worthy of note besides.

Taj-al-Akhbar, Delhi

Atiq Siddiqui writes the following about this newspaper:

In one of the issues of *Sehr-e-Samari*, Lucknow, we learn about the existence of *Taj-al-Akhbar* through an advertisement. We learn that the paper was given its name by Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and that it was issued by Muhammad Abdullah Khan on the request of Captain Sarfarazuddaulah Dildar Ali Khan Bahadur.

There is nothing in *Sehr-e-Samari* to indicate whether *Taj-al-Akhbar* was published from Delhi or Lucknow. In

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any case it must have been first issued in February or March 1857.

Siddiqui must have made the above statement through oversight since in the same issue of *Sehr-e-Samari* there is another passage, immediately above the advertisement, which unambiguously states that *Taj-al-Akhbar* was published from Delhi. The passage praises the quality of *Taj-al-Akhbar* as a newspaper and then gives a "summary" of the advertisement which gives sufficient indication of the journalistic style of *Taj-al-Akhbar* and acquaints us with some other details about the newspaper:

> Let it be revealed unto those that are knowledgeable about the world that the best among men are those that are desirous to learn and find out, and superior is the man who is eager of knowledge and lover of news, and the lowest in the community of man is one who shuns this excellent activity. Thus it is that (we have issued) this newspaper which has been given the title of *Taj-al-Akhbar* by the Mightiest of the Mighty, King of the Magnificence of Jamshed, Abu Zafar Muhammad Sirajuddin Bahadur Shah, the conqueror (may God forever preserve his land and Kingdom). Hence, this slave, the incarnation of sin, Muhammad Abdullah Khan, issues (this newspaper) in compliance with the wishes and orders of the Captain of great glory Sarfarazuddaulah Dildar Ali Khan Bahadur (may his greatness last for ever). (This newspaper is issued) so that wise may get things of value and the ignorant may get perfect guidance.....

Certain news items from *Taj-al-Akhbar* were reprinted in *Sehr-e-Samari*. A selection from them may be given below:

> A correspondent sends us the heart-rending news that the telegraph office at Barakpur was burnt down in a fire. Official papers were destroyed in this fire and so were the instruments of telegraphy. The incident has caused great shock everywhere.
>
> (*Sehr-e-Samari*, 16 March 1857)

> Someone from Karachi sends us the news that on the 19th of February the British community there were greatly

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perturbed and agitated to hear a news which they had received from somewhere telegraphically. Shock and disappointment were writ large on every face. Only God knows what news it is that has disturbed everyone in the (British) army. So far the details are not available, and so they have not been given here. As soon as the Chronicler's pen learns it, it shall be delivered unto the understanding reader.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 16 March 1857)

Sadiq-al-Akhbar informs us that recently fighting between the British and Iranians took place near a town called Khushab. There was much exchange of fire. The Iranians finally vanquished the British. The enemies of the British had their heart's content. The British had a number of casualties; many had their heads cut off from their injured bodies..... (The Iranians are now confident) that the British would never be able to challenge them. They may fight and fight but they would never be able to overcome the Iranians.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 27 April 1857)

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4

Newspapers and Periodicals from Old Delhi College

Qiran-al-Sa'dain

The old Delhi College came into existence as the meeting-point of the East and the West. If, on the one hand, great geniuses like Maulana Mamllokul Ali and Imam Bakhsh Sahbai were actively engaged in the task of reviving oriental studies, then there were also men like Dr. Sprenger who had whole-heartedly dedicated themselves to the spread of modern knowledge. The latter was an embodiment of the best German virtues of mind and character and was a free-thinking theist. He was totally free of all kinds of national and religious prejudices and a man of catholic outlook. His attitude towards Islam was one of sympathy and admiration. He writes in the Preface to his Life of the Prophet:

1. The downfall of the Muslims cannot be attributed to anything in Islam. The followers of the Prophet of Islam had in a wonderfully short period of time achieved extraordinary political power and a high degree of civilisation. During the period of the Crusades they were definitely superior to the Christians.
2. When I was called from Calcutta to reform the (old) Delhi College, I did my best to bring about useful

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ehanges in the syllabi. I successfully sought permission from the Council of Education to introduce *tafsir* and *hadith* (Exegesis of the Quran and study of the Prophet's Traditions) into the syllabi. I also sought permission to attempt to raise the standard of the teaching of Persian.

3. I did my best to find out ways to improve the conditions of the Muslims during the time the educational institutions of the Muslims were under my charge.

The presence in India of a man like Dr. Sprenger was nothing less than a blessing. The best of the East and the West came together in his person. He was deeply read in oriental studies and languages at the same time that he was an expert in western sciences and arts. He wanted to introduce the East to the West and to bring about a rejuvenation of the East through contact with the West. In the Preface of his above-quoted book. Dr. Sprenger pointed out that as a young man he had found that people in the West devoted themselves only to the study of the classics and had scarcely any knowledge of the orient. He then decided to dedicate himself to the study of oriental arts and sciences. He also resolved to go to oriental countries and introduce them to western knowledge and bring back a knowledge of the Orient to the West.

Dr. Sprenger was appointed as the Principal of the (old) Delhi College in 1845. After a thorough study of the problems faced by the College, he found the students of the Oriental Section to be deficient in the use of a correct prose style. In his report he said:

> A reason for the backwardness of students in the Persian classes is that the teachers (of Persian) are fond of an ornate, rhymed style of prose and prefer the latter (decadent) authors (of Persian) to the earlier (purer) classics.

Dr. Sprenger now adopted methods that were intended to bring about improvements in the older methods of teaching. These changes encouraged students towards pursuit of learning. Western arts and sciences too were introduced into the syllabus along with traditional knowledge. The new changes brought about a widening of the mental horizons of the students,

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inculcated in them the ability to think independently and introduced them to a simple and straightforward prose style. The same year Dr. Sprenger established a lithographic press in order to print the prescribed texts. It was called Matba'-al-Uloom. A learned periodical, entitled *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, was also issued the same year (1845). It was called *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, Dr. Sprenger pointed out, because it symbolised the union of the East and the West. It was the first attempt of its kind. Dr. Sprenger had the satisfaction, eleven years later at the time of his return from India, to find that more than a dozen journals of a similar kind had come into existence by then.[1]

Qiran-al-Sa'dain was a weekly learned periodical consisting of twelve pages and published under the editorship of Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar.[2] The subscription rate was Rs. 2/- per month. Garcin de Tassy also made a mention of this periodical: "It is an illustrated periodical which published articles on science, literature and politics. It aims at introducing its readers to western ideas. It is published once a week "[3]

The *Dictionary of National Biography* confirms the statement of Dr. Sprenger:

> He (Sprenger) is also credited during his residence at Delhi with having printed at his lithographic press in Hindustani, the first weekly periodical to appear in an Indian vernacular.
>
> (Vol. 18, p. 833)

The tutelage of Dr. Sprenger went a long way to help Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar acquire unusual ability as an editor and scholar. His editorial ability was reflected in the high quality of the periodical which was praised in the official report in the following words:

> Among the journals at present being published from Delhi College, the *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is of a very high standard.

1. *Delhi College Magazine* (Qadim Dilli College Number), p. 126.
2. Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar was a senior scholar in the English Department of Delhi College. He was the translator of Mill's *Political Economy* and the *History of England*. He was later associated with Malwa College and still later became the editor of *Malwah Akhbar*.
3. *Khutabat*, p. 31.

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> No other journal of this province presents more valuable and varied information (than *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*).

Hamilton, the Resident of Indore, was greatly impressed by the unusual editorial, administrative and scholarly ability of Pandit Bhaskar, and so he invited him to come to Indore in 1848 and entrusted him the work of the printing press, the editorship of *Malwah Akhbar*, and teaching at Malwah College. Bhaskar wrote in the 27 November 1848 issue of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*:

> The Editor of this newspaper humbly informs all those kind and courageous friends whose help was responsible for the promotion of this newspaper that he has been appointed as the Second Master of Persian at Indore College and Manager of its press through the magnanimity of Mr. Hamilton Sahib Bahadur...the Resident of Malwah.[1]

The issue dated 4 December 1848 was the last under his editorship since in it we find the following note: "Now I give up this service owing to my imminent departure for Indore."

The editorial responsibilities were now assumed by Muhammad Husain as indicated by the printline after the issue dated 11 December 1848. The next editor was Moti Lal who was a distinguished student of the English Department in the College. The official report for 1849 tells us:

> Moti Lal is the editor now of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*. He is a student in the English Department. The periodicals published in this province—*Muhib-e-Hind*, *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* and *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*—are all of high standard. The editors of these periodicals are suitable persons for the task of introducing western knowledge and literature to Indian readers. Keeping this in view it is regrettable that the circulation of these periodicals has decreased this year in comparison with that of last year. The circulation of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* has been reduced to 22 from 60. The other two periodicals do manage to make a saving. This, however, cannot be said of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* which can barely survive.
>
> These periodicals have not much succeeded in the task of propagating Western thoughts and ideas among the

1. ***Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, Vol. 4, No. 48.**

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natives. Analysing its causes Dr. Sprenger has pointed out that an important reason is the high postal rate which does not encourage wide circulation. Circulation is generally confined to the places of issue or towns adjoining them.[1]

A change of editor in 1850 did not bring about any improvement in the circulation. Saiyyid Ashraf Ali, the new editor, continued to hold this responsibility for two years and was replaced by Karim Bakhsh in 1853. The quality of the periodical, it appears, had not deteriorated since the official report (for 1853) praises it: "*Qiran-al-Sa'dain* which is ably discharging its duty of training and educating the minds of the common people is still engaged in the same task."

The official report for 1848 reveals the important fact that not only Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar but all those associated with the old Delhi College were in fact functioning as the instruments of the Company government. The report says:

> All these periodicals and newspapers are printed at the College press which once was under the direct control of the College but now is no more so. The reason was that the College Committee found it could not control the Press as it did not exclusively own it. The Committee was thus not in a position to supervise the work of the Press—to scrutinise its publications—in accordance with the wishes of the government. Hence it was decided to remove the Press from the jurisdiction of the College. As far as these newspapers are concerned, the Committee reached the conclusion that it was possible for it to supervise them. With this in view the Committee agreed to undertake the work of supervision for a period of three months on the following conditions:
>
> 1. The articles in all the journals should first be given for scrutiny to the first and second *maulvis* in the Arabic Department. They will be authorised to delete from them whichever portions they think to be unsuitable.
> 2. After publication one copy of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* should be sent to Mr. J.P. Gubbins, member of the local committee and one copy each of *Muhib-e-Hind* and *Fawaid-*

1. ***Subah-e-Shumal wa Maghrabi Ke Akhbarat wa Matbua't*, p. 110.**

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al-Nazerin should be sent to Mr. Taylor, the temporary Secretary of the local committee. These gentlemen shall thoroughly scrutinise them.

Qiran-al-Sa'dain was regarded as one of the most distinguished journals of the country for the high quality of its contents and its excellent formal features. A selection of some of the titles from its various issues confirms the above statements:

A Summerised History of India:	24 April 1848
History of Multan:	8 May 1848
Akbar's Administration:	22 August 1848
Arts and Sciences did not flourish among Hindus:	23 August 1848
An Account of Constantine the Great:	26 August 1848
An Account of Queen Elizabeth:	2 October 1848
Thoughts of a Man who is eager to find out the truth about religion for himself:	16 October 1848
Proofs about Existence	6 November 1848
Laziness of Indians in all works of Public Welfare and those which might be of value to the Country:	27 November 1848
An Account of Socrates. the Greek	-do-
The Advantages of the Study of Geography	-do-

Occasionally articles from other newspapers and periodicals were reprinted in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*. "History of Jaipur," for example, was reprinted from *Muhib-e-Hind*, a sister publication, in three consecutive issues (20 November, 27 November and 4 December 1848).

Qiran-al-Sa'dain had its role defined by the fact of its being a semi-official publication reflecting the point of view of the westernised establishment in Delhi. It was a sophisticated instrument of propaganda though at times it sided with the current of public opinion. One such occasion was when there was a widespread criticism of the government policy of the enhancement of postal rates. Even the English language news-

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papers had joined in the protest against the measure. *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* (which occasionally published news also though in the main it was devoted to scholarly and academic writings) published a comment on the situation:

> The editor of an English newspaper writes that one of his subscribers has stopped buying his newspaper owing to the (enhanced) postal rates. The (annual) subscription of the newspaper is Rs. 64/- while the postal rate is Rs. 58/-. This increased postal rate is a great burden on newspapers and is a hindrance in the spread of knowledge.

The slant in the presentation of political news and comment in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* was subtly to denigrate the "native" rulers and royal families. That the Indian potentates had in fact reached a measure of degradation unprecedented in history cannot be denied. The story of the decline of Mughal power after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 is one of the gradual loss of prestige by the monarch. The invasions by Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmad Shah Abdali and later the slow but sure acquisition of power by the British had reduced the Mughal Emperor to a cipher so much so that by the middle of the nineteenth century the British Resident at Delhi had legal jurisdiction extending into the Exalted Fort (*Qila'-e-Mu'alla*). The British did their best to humiliate in all possible ways not only the last Mughal Emperor but all other "native" rulers as well. It is in this context that the following news and its tendentious presentation by *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* must be viewed. It is entitled "News about Maharani Jinda and Lahore:"

> It has now been conclusively proved that Maharani Jinda, the mother of Maharaja Dalip Singh, was a party to the conspiracy that was recently hatched at Lahore. She used to help the conspirators financially. It was decided by the Resident Bahadur of Lahore to send her away to Benaras from Shekhupura as a punishment. After the preparations had been made, (two British officers) went to the Maharani with the Resident's message on the 14th of the current month and told her that both the Resident and the Lahore Court thought it necessary that she be brought to Lahore. The next day a small army contingent with two cannons were despatched to Shekhupura. The army officer was told

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to bring the Maharani by force to Lahore if she or any of her associates offered resistance. The Maharani, however, made no objection to the proposal and immediately agreed to go to Lahore.....

(30 May 1848)

That resentment among the Sikhs against the British was widespread is indicated by the following news in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* about an advertisement that had appeared in Amritsar and that instigated people to rise against the British:

Some thoughtless person has put up an advertisement on the door of a *gurdwara* at Amritsar. The drift of that advertisement is as follows: Since the British have indulged in breach of trust and perpetrated tyrannies, it becomes obligatory on the part of all the followers of the *Gurus* to do their best to exterminate them and to found their own (independent) state. One who is not thus determined is not a true Sikh.

(16 October 1848)

The following interesting news about the behaviour of the ladies of the *harem* at the court of Oudh was published in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* dated 21 February 1848;

One day His Royal Highness expressed the opinion that the allowances given to the ladies of the *harem* were exorbitantly high. The advisers immediately said that His Highness was right and that the allowances could be reduced in such a way as not to affect the ladies' standard of living. A reduction was therefore immediately ordered and quite a substantial sum was deducted from the fixed emoluments. It was no doubt to the advantage of the public treasury. The ladies, on the other hand, were equally unhappy. The idea came to their mind that since His Highness had caused them hardship in the interest of the public, they should avenge themselves on the common people by causing *them* hardship. With this aim in view they collected a huge heap of brickbats on the roof of the palace which is situated close to the market-place. One day all the ladies came together on to the roof and started throwing those brickbats at the huge crowd that usually gathered in Husainabad at that

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time. The passers-by ran helter-skelter for their lives. The incident caused a great stir in the whole city. The Nawab's advisers could think of no other way than restoring the ladies' allowances.

That the old Delhi College with its synthesis of the East and the West, its distinctive syllabus, its concentration on education and its excellent selection of teachers had a marked impact on youthful minds cannot be doubted. It liberated them from the morass of prejudice and sentimentalism and introduced them to logical and liberal thinking. Dr. Sprenger's statement, given below, confirms this:

> The introduction of some modern branches of knowledge at the Oriental (Delhi) College, besides the traditional subjects, resulted in removing that narrowness of mind and prejudice that appears to be the hallmark of the traditional centres of the teaching of Arabic and Persian.

That the winds of change had started blowing is also confirmed by the following report of a meeting in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*:

> Due to the efforts and administrative ability of our Principal Sahib Bahadur all the examinations were held in the proper manner. On the same day, members of the College Committee and a large number of Delhi gentry came to the College to attend a meeting where students read out their original essays. Khwaja Ziauddin Sahib student Class I (Arabic) read out an essay in Urdu. .He was awarded a silver medal by Janab Mufti Sadruddin Khan Bahadur, Sadr-al-Sadoor of Delhi. The essay had the following title: "What is the difference between a personal government and a national (democratic) government, and why is the latter superior to the former?" The following is the concluding sentence of the essay: "When we compare the two forms of government we find that a national government is superior to a personal government in every respect. Both reason and tradition prove that a national government is in every way superior to one in which only one person controls everything."

That a Muslim student of Delhi should think in this manner at the time when the last Mughal Emperor, however weak,

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was still on the throne and that a great contemporary scholar, the embodiment of oriental culture, should laud his views is significant of the changes that had already taken place in the country's ethos.

Fawaid-al-Nazerin

Master Ram Chander, the founder-editor of this important periodical, is one of the important personalities of the nineteenth century in the field of literary study and scholarship.[1] He was not only the recipient of many honours in the fields of science and mathematics but also loved for his great services to his countrymen specially as an author and teacher. He issued an illustrated fortnightly on 23 March 1845, called *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, with the aim of introducing to his readers modern, western ideas. In the beginning it was printed at the press of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* at the house of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar under the auspices of the Members of Majma'-e-Fawaid-al-'am.[2] It was first printed as a supplement of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*[3] and continued to be thus published till 2 September 1845. The name of Master Ram Chander replaced that of the Society as the Chief managing authority with the issue dated 4 October 1846. All this, however, was mere formality since

1. Though the ancestors of Master Ram Chander belonged to Delhi, he was himself born at Panipat in 1821. His father Sunder Lal had served as Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildar. He was first educated at a *maktab*. At the age of twelve he was admitted to an English School but early marriage obliged him to discontinue his studies and to look for a job. His love for learning, was, however, revived when the old Delhi College came into existence. There he completed his education with great distinction and, in February 1844, became a teacher of European Science on a salary of Rs. 50/- per month in the oriental section of the College. He wrote books on Algebra and Trigonometry in Urdu for Vernacular Translation Society. In 1853 he was converted to Christianity. This led to a break with his family. He received many awards for his distinguished publications. He died in 1880.
2. The scholarly society of the old Delhi College.
3. The early issues of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* were printed at the press of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* under the management of Moti Lal. After a while it came to be printed at Matba'-e-Uloom, the press of the Delhi College. It was printed there till the end. Saiyyid Ali's name was included as editor in 1851 though he was its manager.

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Master Ram Chander was the moving spirit behind the periodical right from the beginning.[1]

Fawaid-al-Nizerin was different from other contemporary newspapers and periodicals in that it was devoted exclusively to scholarship and the revival of learning. To quote Master Ram Chander himself:

> This paper has been issued for the benefit of those who do not possess the advantage of learning and not for those who have been educated at a place of higher learning. It is therefore necessary that herein only such articles should be published as could be understood by the former class of people.
>
> (1 November 1848)

Inspite of the great efforts made by the editor to popularise the periodical, its circulation remained limited:

> Let it be noted that at the time of its first issue, it had been decided that nothing except physics and mathematics should appear in the pages of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*. This policy was followed for a long time. But all the while the complaint was heard from various quarters that the contents of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* were beyond the comprehension of readers.

Master Ram Chander was therefore obliged to widen the scope of the periodical and to include contents of a wider and popular appeal. Since the periodical consisted of four pages only, it did not allow much variety in its limited scope. The number of its pages was therefore doubled. The issue dated 25 January 1847 says:

> We had promised that with the increase in its pages we would give current news on the last page. We now fulfill this promise we hope that our subscribers will now get current news also from this low-priced periodical. As a matter of fact there is hardly a periodical in the country which gives both scholarly articles as well as current news at such low price. It has now become a complete journal.

1. Sadiqur Rehman Qidwai, *Master Ram Chander* (Urdu), pp. 61-62.

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Another measure adopted by Master Ram Chander in order to improve circulation was to publish informative and interesting articles on Indian history. This is what he wrote in the issue dated 8 February 1847:

> I consider it appropriate that I should include (in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*) brief accounts of the history of India and of ancient Kings. This would, in my opinion, be of great interest to my readers. It is with this aim in view that I include in the present issue some account and a portrait of Shah Alam, the Emperor of India, that the readers may get pleasure and benefit from it and remember me in their prayers.

The ordinary reader at that time had a greater fondness for poetry than for the rather arid scholarly dissertations which took up most of the space in *Fawaid*. In order to cater to the taste of the common reader Master Ram Chander began to publish some poetry too in his journal. In the issue of 8 March 1847 we find a Persian *ghazal* by Imam Bakhsh Sahbai the opening couplet of which runs as follows:

> What was it that was taken away from my dejected heart
> That my heart totally lost all its comfort?

In the issue dated 23 March 1847 we find a *ghazal* by Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar which begins:

> When I saw my messenger coming to me with a dejected face
> I asked myself: has he found out the intentions of my beloved?

Gradually poetry became an indispensible part of the journal; not only well-known and established poets but lesser known poets too began to be published in *Fawaid*.

The variety of its contents was the most marked feature of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*. Greater space was devoted to serious articles pertaining to a variety of arts and sciences—history, politics, physics, mathematics, metaphysics and divinity. Some idea of the quality and standard of the *Fawaid* can be had from the official report for 1848:

> *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is a journal of the highest standard among those published from Delhi College...though *Fawaid-al-*

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Nazerin too can easily match it in quality. Its editor also publishes a monthly called *Muhibb-e-Hind.* These two journals together are doing a lot to spread western knowledge among the natives. Since *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is a weekly newspaper it cannot be expected to publish as much of scholarly material as is published in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* and *Muhibb-e-Hind.* The editor of these two periodicals has more time and he is also under no obligation to publish current news.

The extract quoted above is a correct objective assessment and is also confirmed by a glance at the titles of some of the contents in the various issues of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*:

Biographical and Historical Essays in Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 5 (1845-50) of *Fawaid*: An account of the Ghaznavid Kingdom; Avecinna; Socrates; Plato; Aristotle; history of Iran; Zoroaster; King Richard of England; Tulsidas and Surdas; ancient Egypt; account of how the Europeans acquired knowledge; King Afred of England; Emperor Akbar; Dost Muhammad Khan of Kabul; Sher Shah Afghan; Napoleon Bonaparte; Firdausi; Diogenes, the Greek philosopher; Emperor Augustus of Rome; Galileo; the character and religious beliefs of various people; the script of the ancient Egyptians; Plutarch; advantages of the study of history; the Arab philosophers; Sir Isaac Newton, the King of philosophers and scientists.

Scientific Essays; The windmill; the Compass; algebra; the rainbow; telegraph; Steam-boat; ballons; the causes of excessive cold and cough; the planet Mars; the proofs of the earth's being a sphere; the telescope; the invention of printing; the circulation of blood; the shortage of rainfall in India; barometer;

Ethical Essays: the Science of morals; Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them; idleness; the education of girls; flattery; pride; patience; envy; anger; cruelty; fanaticism; the advice of Socrates about the worship of God; hard work;

Social, Political and Economic Essays: the British Company government; the causes of ignorance in India; the definition and purpose of punishment; the welfare of the

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> Indian people; the advantages of trade; the disadvantages of early marriage; all-round development under British rule;

Master Ram Chander was a man of dedication and courage. He had to face adversity right from his childhood: he was only ten or eleven years old when he lost his father Quite early he got married to a handicapped lady: his wife was both deaf and dumb. Circumstances obliged him to discontinue his education at an early stage and to accept a clerical job. His ambition, however, helped him overcome his circumstances. He completed his education with great distinction and later on made his mark in life. His career is an object lesson in courage and determination. He wanted to see the same virtues in his countrymen. He wrote:

> Even in this age God has created men who wholeheartedly cherish the well-being of their country. Unfortunately, nobody here wants to do anything for his country. Everyone says: what good will it do if I alone did anything. Another disadvantage is that our country is divided among various communities. Lack of courage is the greatest vice we suffer from, and it is because of this that we have always been slaves. We do not know how long we will continue to be so. We do not even have a conception of free government. We have never seen Indians who were inspired by patriotism to take part in governmental activities. Under these circumstances it is necessary for us to acquire a knowledge of different sciences without which our eyes will never be opened.
>
> A study of the history of free nations is essential for us...Let us see when our destiny smiles on us.

The extract given above fully reveals the personality of Master Ram Chander—his appreciation of the role of knowledge in transforming society, his patriotism, his love of freedom and his exhortation to a life of action and dynamism. As a man he was not daunted by the West inspite of its superiority in every field. When an Englishman publicly expressed the fear that the Indians might become independent after acquiring a knowledge of modern science and western culture, Master Ram Chander wrote:

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> Some Englishmen had and still have the opinion that by learning the European arts and sciences Indians would become independent-minded and would become courageous enough to challenge the British rule. They would thus resolve to become the masters of their own country. To train the Indians therefore along western lines is tantamount to undermining British rule in this country since after a while Indians would claim a place of equality with the British and might even throw them out of the country.

This argument, according to Master Ram Chander, was not valid and amounted to denying to the Indians an access to modern knowledge:

> The above contention has not so far been proved true nor is it likely that such an eventuality would come to pass in the near future. It is unlikely that Indians would be able to make so much progress that they would be able to challenge the British. We should do our best to set at rest such fears in the minds of the British people and devote ourselves wholeheartedly to the task of acquiring modern knowledge.

Master Ram Chander did not deny the utility of traditional knowledge but he thought that centuries of decline had grossly narrowed down the scope of this knowledge. Innovativeness had become extinct. Traditional arts and sciences had become a victim of stagnation. Traditionalism had become the hallmark of all the theoretical and practical sciences, and even the smallest amount of deviation was frowned upon. Master Ram Chander wrote:

> The majority of the people of India and Iran follow Aristotle in everything and deviation from his teaching is not tolerated. Going against Aristotle is regarded as sheer folly. What else can we call it except prejudice and dogmatism. How can the arts and sciences develop under such conditions? The logic of Aristotle is so fallacious and his wisdom so shaky that it has misled countless people over centuries. Aristotle has had such an evil effect on Greek philosophy that it still is a prisoner of his erroneous conceptions. Those who have fallen a victim to Aristotelian philosophy always shun true wisdom.

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Master Ram Chander was also critical of the traditional methods of teaching and curricula. He thought that the traditional system was lifeless and without meaning. The teachers were ignorant of the true principles of teaching; they thought that rote-learning was equivalent to developing the personality and character of the taught. Condemning this stagnant system he wrote:

> Let us now see what kind of education the young child gets when he goes to the *Mian ji* (the traditional tutor). The process begins with the learning of the Persian alphabet. It is followed by the study of *Karima* and *Khaliq Bari* (traditional text-books). These in turn are followed by the teaching of *Gulistan* (the great Persian classic of prose and poetry by Sheikh Sa'di) in such a way that the teacher tells the student only the literal meaning of the various passages and helps them decipher the text. Having learnt his day's lesson the child goes and sits at some distance and starts repeating what he has learnt like parrot. All the wisdom of life and of morals that Sa'di has put into the *Gulistan* is lost on the child since he is concerned only with its literal meaning.
>
> (*Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, 15 December 1845)

Master Ram Chander was not unduly impressed by the utility and comprehensiveness of modern knowledge; on the other hand, he had an independent-minded, objective idea of its role as an agent of social change. His emphasis on the value of a study of English was therefore not indicative of a slavish mentality. He wrote:

> English language is a medium through which access can be had to almost all the arts and sciences that exist today. Anyone interested in the pursuit of knowledge must acquire a knowledge of the English language. The British are great traders and travellers. They engage themselves in pursuit of knowledge wherever they go. They acquire a knowledge of the languages of different people and try to find out everything about their true conditions. They translate everything useful in others' languages into their own language and get it printed in their own country. They explore the country they visit and make a map of it. They even

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find out the height of its mountains and acquire a knowledge of the organisation of that society. The English have already got translated into their language whatever knowledge they found in Arabic, Persian and the language of the Shastras (Sanskrit). A man who knows English can easily learn everything about Hindu and Muslim societies and also about other societies even though he may not possess a knowledge of Arabic or Sanskrit. He can acquire a knowledge of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen through English even though he may be totally ignorant of Greek. Thus it is clear that through English we can get an access to all the knowledge to be found in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit.

Besides, the English and the Europeans in general are greatly inventive. Their knowledge is increasing day by day. The steam-driven carriages which can take people, luggage and letters from Delhi to Calcutta in less than two days and telegraphy look like miracles but they are all due to the power given by knowledge. Only knowledge has made them possible.[1]

Though Master Ram Chander believed so much in the utility and comprehensiveness of the English language, yet he did not consider it possible or desirable to spread its knowledge among the masses of the Indian people. He wanted its knowledge confined to a small circle of the elite. He wrote:

> Those who learn the English language can do a lot of good (to their country). In this way they can transfer knowledge from English into Urdu-- all that knowledge which has accumulated in English through translations and that acquired by the English people themselves. This would be of immense benefit to our countrymen. This is the greatest benefit to be derived from a knowledge of English. Otherwise, it is difficult to imagine large masses of the Indian people acquiring a knowledge of English. How else can they have access to modern knowledge except through their own language. The ability to translate can be possessed only by those who have an equal command over both

1. *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, 10 January 1848. Cited in Sadiqur Rehman Qidwai, ***Master Ram Chander***.

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> English and Urdu, Those who have a love for India and do at the same time want to accomplish something beneficial for their countrymen should attempt to translate into Urdu the knowledge that is stored in the English language.
>
> (*Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, 10 January 1848)

Master Ram Chander's outlook on life was utilitarian, comprehensive and logical. He no doubt had an appreciation of aesthetic values and craftsmanship but he considered utility to be the essence of art. The excellent craftsmanship displayed in specimens of art created during the past, specially during the days of feudalism was, for him, a sheer waste of time and skill. In one of his essays he wrote:

> The attention of most people in the past was directed towards tasks that required extra-ordinary labour but had little utility. A researcher tells us that once in the past someone made a miniature ivory carriage so small that it could be hidden under the wings of a fly..... All this shows that in the past people spent their time in doing things requiring hardest of labour but having little utility. People now do not spend so much time and energy in useless activities; they always have some high aim in view when they are engaged in anything.
>
> Man does not require only hard labour and perseverence; it is also necessary that his activities should be directed towards some general good. Some people spend their entire lives in learning some particular style of calligraphy. Let them be asked what good it has done them; it would have been enough for them to learn some simple art of writing and devote the rest of their time to something more useful.
>
> (*Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, 3 May 1847)

The influence of Western ideas on Master Ram Chander enabled him to appreciate the importance of the freedom of expression along with the freedom of thought. Without it full development of the personality of the individual as well as free play of ideas is not possible. In India and the neighbouring countries this kind of freedom was unheard of at that time. On the contrary, Master Ram Chander found that respect for

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individuality, freedom of expression and a social system based on justice flourished unfettered in England. Under the heading, "Freedom of Expression", he wrote in *Fawaid* (dated 15 November 1847):

> Apart from many other good practices that are current in England there is one that gives to everyone the right to express his personal views without fear. He can get them published in different newspapers. If an individual thinks that some royal order or law is improper he has the right to express his opinion along with supporting arguments either through a pamphlet or a handbill. Nothing can be done against such a person even if his published opinion is entirely contrary to that of the monarch and his ministers.

Master Ram Chander had been too deeply influenced by the West to realize that a thoroughly democratic system had once flourished under the early Islamic caliphate though it was soon destroyed by hereditary monarchy or *mulukiat*. The West had indeed learnt a lot from this, supreme example of a society based on equality and justice. As the great Urdu poet Iqbal put it in our own day:

> The Sons of Trinity took away the heritage of Abraham;
> The dust of Hejaz became the foundation-stone of the Church.

What could only be seen by Master Ram Chander was the contemporary reality of the tyrannies of personal rule, and he truthfully wrote:

> This system (of freedom of expression) is totally absent from eastern countries such as India and Iran. Anyone expressing a view opposed to that of the monarch in Iran would immediately lose his head.[1]

Master Ram Chander was a great champion of female education. In an article published in *Sultan-al-Akhbar* opposition had been voiced to the teaching of philosophy to girls. It had therein been stressed that girls should be taught only

1. Qidwai, *Master Ram Chander* (Urdu), p. 110.

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the rudiments of religious knowledge. Master Ram Chander strongly opposed the view, and wrote:

> Now I would like to ask the editor of *Sultan-al-Akhbar* what harm there is in educating girls. If he expresses the opinion that the shara' (Islamic code of conduct) prohibits us from teaching philosophy to girls, he is not right. I have a number of Muslim friends and they tell me that the shara' has nothing to say against the teaching of philosophy to girls. So far as the advantages of giving proper education to girls are concerned we have already written about them in the previous issue.

In the light of the above and other writings it may be said that Master Ram Chander was in favour of widening the scope of female education. He was also in favour of and advocated the education of the handicapped perhaps because his own wife was a total invalid. He knew about the existence of special institutions in Europe where the handicapped were educated. He wanted such institutions to be established in India too.

Master Ram Chander welcomed the successful attempts made in Calcutta to establish the country's first girls school in 1849. He considered it to be an important step towards the ushering in of the age of reason in the country:

> The intelligentia and gentry of Calcutta had long been engaged in mutual consultations aimed at establishing an institution for female education. Now Babu Jai Kishen Mukerji has undertaken to accomplish the task through his personal efforts. He has firmly resolved to open a school and hospital for women. The school will be meant for the education of the daughters of the gentry. Since Mr. Mukherji alone could not bear the expenses for starting a school... he approached the government which has promised to give him financial aid. It is now hoped that the school will soon begin to flourish and spread enlightenment.

He was critical of the hold exercised by traditionalists over a field of vital interest to national rejuvenation:

> There are many *munshis*, *maulvis* and learned men in the city of Delhi but they do not give even a moment's thought

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to this important problem (female education). God knows what lethargy or what prejudice in favour of the traditional system works in their minds that they do not pay any attention to the problem. Often they themselves complain of the ignorance and folly of their womenfolk. They never realise that the true cause of this folly and ignorance is the lack of education among women.

(*Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, 28 January 1847)

Not only were women victims of age-old ignorance, the whole Indian society suffered from the tyranny of senseless customs. Superstitions and ignorance reigned everywhere. Arts and crafts languished. Economic depression and age-old social customs conspired to keep Indian society backward. Master Ram Chander was deeply concerned with this state of affairs and wrote a series of articles on social customs in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* with a reformer's zeal. He was particularly critical of the practice of spending lavishly on weddings and other functions. This is what he had to say on this subject in the issue of 1 December 1845:

> The people of this country, whether Hindus or Muslims, spend money on weddings in a way that suggests it has no value for them. It would appear from all this that we are a very generous people and hate miserliness. But wait. Let us for a moment go, say, to a trader and ask for a paltry sum as help. We should be surprised indeed by his stern refusal. The moment, however, a wedding in the family takes place, a complete transformation occurs. The whole city resounds with the news, drums are beaten and there is illumination everywhere. Thousands of guests are feasted. You make enquiries about the rich gentleman who is marrying off his favourite daughter, and you hear in reply that the rich gentleman is none other than your familiar blacksmith or a person of similar station in life. If this is true of ordinary people of the artisan class what can we not expect from the rich and gentlemanly class. Anyone not confirming to the established practice soon becomes the object of others' irony. It is because of the fear of the others that everyone is obliged to spend lavishly on weddings and

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similar functions. They thus encourage each other towards beggary.

One other social evil rampant in contemporary society was child-marriage. Master Ram Chander had himself suffered from the evil consequences of this custom so he could be expected to write on this subject with feeling. The following may be extracted from the issue of 1 December 1845:

> A boy married early is for a while pampered and encouraged to enjoy a life of luxury. Soon, however, pampering gives place to the bitter realities of life: he has to walk about the streets in torn shoes in search of a living. The young bride who is equally pampered at her father's house and who is treated to a lavish life for a short while at her in-laws' too faces the stark realities of living with a husband who is ill-equipped to face the challenges of life. Soon her beautiful wedding dresses are put on sale in exchange for paltry sums that are necessary to eke out a hard existence.[1]

Keeping the general context of Master Ram Chander's views of life in mind it is not difficult to infer the main trend of his political thinking. The excellent administrative reforms that the British had introduced in the areas under their direct control, on the one hand, and the ill-governed tyrannies that were the order of the day in the rest of the country, on the other, were in sharp contrast with each other, and this contrast naturally predisposed Master Ram Chander in favour of the political system that had been introduced by the British. The occasional comments made by him in his writing reflect an intelligence exceptional for its day:

> History tells us that during Muslim rule everywhere there used to be governors or *subedars* in different regions. They used to have absolute control over the subjects and did whatever they liked in their respective regions. In return they paid a fixed tribute to the King. These *subedars* used to become autocratic during the regime of weak kings but remained obedient and efficient whenever there was a strong and able king on the throne....

1. Cited in *Master Ram Chander*, pp. 121-22.

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During the regimes of powerful monarchs the subjects were happy. The reverse was always the case when a foolish or weak King was on the throne. In 1735, for instance, India was ruled by Muhammad Shah. History reveals that this monarch never came out of his palace and took little interest in the affairs of the Kingdom. During his regime the Marathas acquired great power, raided and burnt up areas around Delhi. It was also during his regime that Nadir Shah invaded India.

Now, a contrary system prevails in England. If someone loses a case in the court of a *munsif*, he can file an appeal with a judge, and from there in still higher courts. It is because of such a system that no officer can easily perpetrate injustice on an ordinary citizen.

Notwithstanding its many failings when judged by modern standards, the *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* was too far ahead of its times. The total absence of a liberal outlook, the unwillingness to accept change and the rigid traditionalism of the middle decades of the nineteenth century was hardly a suitable time for a journal that looked forward to the days of constitutional politics and modern scientific education. The absence of the means of communication, the decadent cultural and intellectual ethos of Delhi and most of all the radically modern outlook of Maṣter Ram Chander were the main factors responsible for the lack of popularity of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*. Many readers thought that the contents of the *Fawaid* smacked of atheism. The circulation therefore gradually declined. The official report for 1849 tells us:

> *Muhibb-e-Hind*, *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* and *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* are all of a high standard judged by the criteria of variety and informativeness. The respective editors of these journals are eminently suited for the task of educating their countrymen and acquainting them with European arts and sciences. It is therefore to be regretted that the circulation of these journals has sharply declined this year instead of going up. The circulation of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* has gone down from 150 to 140.

The report for the next year (1850) gives us the following information:

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The editor of *Muhibb-e-Hind* and *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* (which in fact are not newspapers but periodicals) is Master Ram Chander. *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is now edited by Saiyyid Ali. These three are the best journals of this province but their circulation has further declined. They now survive merely on the support of European subscribers, the number of native subscribers is almost nil. The circulation of the *Fawaid al-Nazerin* has declined to 52 from 140.

Though, according to the official report for 1851, the circulation had increased to 84, it again declined in 1852. We are told (in the official report for 1852):

> Both *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* and *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* are generally considered useful for the propagation of European learning, and the style and quality of writing in both the journals is getting better day by day. But the circulation of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is only 21 and that of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* 62.

The decline in circulation entailed considerable financial loss. This is clearly evident in the following extract from *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, dated 1 May 1850:

> The submission (of the editor) before the buyers of this periodical is: at the time of issuing the periodical the intention of the editor was to present before the readers articles on history and other branches of learning. He had totally ignored private gain and priced it in such a way as to recover the expenses of printing and illustrations. The editor had taken upon himself the task of translating parts of books from English language without any hope of compensation; the only aim in doing so was to acquaint the readers with the contents of those English books and thus to deserve their gratitude I had great hopes of appreciation from my countrymen and expected them to support this periodical. I regret to say that no one really appreciated this venture for the spread of knowledge. Some even attempted to put an end to it. This may indirectly be inferred from the fact that on most buyers subscription for all the numbers issued so far (No. 1 to No. 22) is still due. We had no response from them when we sent them reminders about subscriptions. Further reminders were directly returned to us. This would

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clearly indicate that these gentlemen did not wish the journal to continue to be published. This time I humbly request the subscribers to send to me whatever amount is due on them so that the periodical may continue to be published. They may kindly do so within a month.

Master Ram Chander continued to publish the periodical inspite of the unfavourable circumstances. An incident, however, did occur on 12 July 1853 which greatly shocked people in the whole of north India, specially Delhi and the areas around it. Prejudice was converted into open hostility and doubts gave place to certainty when people came to know that Master Ram Chander had embraced Christianity. *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* ceased publication the same year. The brief comment in the official report reads: "*Fawaid-al-Nazerin* in which there used to appear many useful articles on scholarly subjects has discontinued publication."[1]

Muhibb-e-Hind

Master Ram Chander's passion for the dissemination of knowledge could not be satisfied by the narrow scope of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*. His commitment to the well-being of his country, specially its intellectual and cultural rejuvenation, was so strong that it led him to start another journal, an illustrated monthly, in September 1847. It was at first known as *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* but later (after the first two issues) changed its name to *Muhibb-e-Hind*. At first it was printed at the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* press of Maulvi Muhammad Baqar under the management of Pandit Moti Lal, printer. Later it was printed at Matba'-al-Uloom. The subscription rate was Re. 1/- per month. It was advertised in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* before its actual publication since in the issue dated 16 September 1847 Master Ram Chander wrote:

> Previously we had informed our readers that a periodical called *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* in Urdu language would soon be issued under the management of the present humble writer. The first issue of that periodical was, by God's grace,

1. Cited in *Subah-e-Shumal wa Maghrabi Ke Akhbarat wa Matbu'at*, p. 111.

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published on 1 September 1847. It was highly valued by men of insight. Useful articles will, if God willing, be always published in this periodical. There will be essays on the history of various countries—India, England, Iran, Afghanistan, etc.—and essays on ethical subjects. Besides, there will also be in it articles on scientific subjects written in easily comprehensible language. We will also give in it brief accounts of the British Parliament and how laws are passed by it. There will be tales of wonder and also polished poems by accomplished masters along with their pictures. This periodical would contain illustrations and maps of buildings etc. as required by the contents of various articles. The number of its pages is fifty, and it is priced at Re. 1/- per copy. Let it be known to men of learning and wealth that this periodical would be different from others of its kind in that it would be like a rare book to be always kept and not thrown away after a hurried reading.

In the following I give some idea to the readers of some of the contents of the issue dated 1 September 1847. The first article deals with the city of Delhi and also gives a map of this city. The next article is concerned with the reasons for the lack of propagation of the useful arts and sciences in India. The third article gives to the reader an account of the island of Ceylon. The fourth is about the King of Iran along with his picture. The fifth gives an account of a *mushaira* (poetic symposium) and also its picture. Tbe last deals with Emperor Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Muhammad Bahadur Shah Ghazi and also gives his picture. Similar articles will be published in future issues also.

Only two issues of *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* had been published that some one pointed out to Master Ram Chander that a journal with the same title was already in circulation from Mirzapur. The name of Master Ram Chander's periodical was therefore changed to *Muhibb-e-Hind*. He wrote:

Since we had no knowledge that a newspaper called *Khair-khwah-e-Hind* was already in circulation in India, we had given the above name to our journal. Now we have come to learn that such a newspaper is published from Mirzapur.

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We did not therefore think it proper to retain the same name. Our periodical is now called *Muhibb-e-Hind.*

A number of researchers including Professor Qasim Ali Sajan Lal, Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui and Dr. Abdul Salam Khurshid have erred in believing that only one issue was published under the title of *Khairkhwah-e-Hind*. The note in India office Library and the fact that a copy of the second issue was owned by Maulana Imdad Sabri conclusively prove that two issues were in fact published under the original title. The contents of the second issue are as follows:

1. History of Oudh: accounts of Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan, Nawab Safdar Jung; Nawab Shuja'ud-daulah; Nawab Ghaziuddin Haider; Muhammad Ali Shah and Shah Amjad Ali Khan.
2. An Account of Sadhus;
3. An Account of planets;
4. An Ode by Sheikh Ibrahim 'Zauq.'

Besides, the issue contains portraits of Nawab Shuja'ud-daulah and Nawab Asifuddaulah, illustrations of a comet, and a chart of the planetary system.[1]

The passages quoted by Maulana Imdad Sabri in his book from *Muhibb-e-Hind* and *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* reflect Master Ram Chander's historical insight, scholarly integrity and forthrightness of expression. We see in them his sharp and penetrating intellect at work. Here is an extract from his article on the history of Oudh.

> The land in Oudh is fertile, and all kinds of crops can easily grow in it. It is all because of the fact that there are many rivers and canals in this land. There are no famines. There has been perfect peace in that land for the last eighty years. No outsider has ravaged this land during all this period. Notwithstanding all this, the country is desolate. The reason is obvious: the ruler is autocratic and can perpetrate any amount of injustice on his subjects. Any attempt at rebellion is ruthlessly suppressed with help from the British: they subjugate the people and hand them over to the King's men who are even more ruthless than the monarch.

1. Maulana Imdad Sabri, *Tarikh-e-Sahafat-e-Urdu*, p. 215.

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The annual income of the land of Oudh is thought to be about a crore and a half. The country is divided into districts or *chaklas*, and each *chakla* is sold to the highest bidder. The *chakledars* fleece the common people as much as they can since they want money not only for themselves but also for bribing the King's ministers who would otherwise deprive them of their *chaklas*.

If this is the case of *chakledars*, the condition of the *zamindars* and that of the country in general can very well be imagined. Thousands of villages have been thoroughly ruined by the system and the villagers have turned into thieves and robbers. No body bothers about this state of affairs. There is thus total administrative chaos in the land of Oudh. The reason for all this is that howsoever foolish and incompetent the ruler might be he can always bank on the support of the British. There is little doubt that whatever injustices the poor people of Oudh endure are all due to the help the ruler gets from the British.[1]

What was going to be the direction of the development of the popular language in the country had become clear to men of understanding quite early in the nineteenth century. It was known not only to western traders and scholars but also to men of insight within the country. The problem relating to the medium of instruction had also come to engage people's attention. The following extract from Master Ram Chander's article "The Education of Indians" acquires significance in the above context:

> The day may come when Indians would be the equal of the British in wisdom and courage. This can be done by translating English books into Urdu and thus educating Indians. It should be clear that Urdu language is understood by people in distant parts of the country. There no doubt are differences of dialect in various regions. However, if the people of Punjab cannot speak like those of Delhi, they can at least understand the latter. Easy comprehensibility is obviously the most important characteristic required in a popular language. Now the Urdu language, that is, the

1. Sabri, *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

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language spoken in and around Delhi, is easily understood from Hyderabad in the south to the borders of Nepal and from river Attak and Surat in the west to the city of Patna in the east. The rest of the Indians too can easily acquire a knowledge of this language. No other native Indian language can compare with Urdu in popularity.

The government should establish in the big cities Urdu medium colleges just as it has established English and Arabic medium institutions in the country. Such Colleges may teach Urdu, and through its medium may give instruction in different branches of learning—history, astronomy and engineering. If it takes six years to acquire a knowledge of these subjects through the medium of English, it may take only two years to learn them through Urdu.

The fact that the mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction has not yet been fully grasped in our country. The ruling classes are still captivated by the charm of English which has not yet declined. Institutions where mother tongue is the medium of instruction are generally looked down upon. English-medium schools have become a greater craze after independence than they ever were. The problem no doubt is complex but the fact is that in the case of a majority of people the preference for English is motivated by the sense of inferiority deliberately engendered by the British after the events of 1857. The views of Master Ram Chander on the subject of medium of instruction were not casually formed, they must have been a result of deliberation based on considerable teaching experience at the old Delhi College and on insight and deep reflection. Master Ram Chander himself was a product of the system he advocated. Though he was associated with the oriental section of Delhi College, he achieved such distinction in the field of mathematics that his work received recognition even in Europe where it was recommended to be prescribed in syllabi. He was awarded a *Khil'at* by the government as a mark of its appreciation.

Maulvi Abdul Haq who has discussed many problems with scholarly insight in his book *Marhoom Delhi College* has also collected some valuable material on this subject. He writes:

The supervision of all the educational institutions in this

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province (Delhi and what is now known as U.P.) was entrusted to the Lt. Governor after 1843. Mr. Thomson was the then Lt. Governor of the North-Western province. The first problem to engage his attention was that of the medium of instruction, a problem that is at the root of all successful and right education. He closed down all the small English-medium schools in the region and replaced them with institutions where native languages were the medium of instruction. He himself has given the reasons for doing so in a memorandum the substance of which may be given as follows:

"English language is not as popular in the North-Western province as it is in Bengal. There are hardly any European settlers in this region nor is there a class of businessmen here who would carry on their transactions through the medium of English. There is no supreme court here where proceedings might be executed in English. The government business apart from correspondence among the higher officials, is entirely carried on in the native language. There is, therefore, not much encouragement here for people to learn English."

Thus Mr. Thomson thought that the only way to make an impact on the minds of the people of the North-Western province was not through English but the native language.[1]

What advantages were derived from the implementation of Mr. Thomson's proposals can be learnt from the following extract from Maulvi Abdul Haq's book.

> There were three classes of Persian in the Oriental Department of Delhi College, and each class was divided into two sections. There were four classes of Arabic. There were sixty six students in the Persian class and thirty nine in Arabic. Apart from these language classes there were also science classes where instruction in western science was given through the medium of Urdu. Master Ram Chander and other teachers gave lessons in science with great enthusiasm and ability. The students in these science classes had made such progress in the study of mathematics, natural

1. Maulvi Abdul Haq, *Marhoom Delhi College* (Urdu), p. 121.

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philosophy and history that they successfully competed with those in the English medium classes and were often found superior to them.[1]

The influence of modern science and rational outlook had already encouraged Master Ram Chander to renounce his inherited beliefs. He remained engaged in the study of various religions for a long time and entered into *munaziras* (religious disputations) with a number of people. After a long process of reflection he came to accept monotheism. All the while he was also busy in propagating a rational outlook in matters of religious faith. He made an attack on superstition in an article entitled "The Ways of the Sadhus" and published it in *Khair-khwah-e-Hind* (October 1847):

> A historian tells us that this group of ascetics (*sadhus*) was first organised in 1714 B. (1658 A.D.) and the founder of this order was one Birbhan. He had in his turn been taught by another *rishi* who had ordered him to propagate it in the world. This system of asceticism was written down in a Hindi book called *Adi Upadesh*. Some of the main teachings in this book are as follows:
>
> 1. Believe in one God who has created us and who can also destroy us. No one is greater than Him, and He alone should be worshipped—not any objects created by Him made of earth, stone, metal or wood.
> 2. Do not be tempted by wealth or physical attractiveness. Do not steal. God is all-forgiving. He alone should be trusted.
> 3. Do not touch intoxicants. Prostration before idols or men is not proper.[2]

An essay competition had been organised by the Gujrat Vernacular Society on the subjet of superstitions. The winner of the first prize was one Dalpat Rai and he was awarded the then quite substantial sum of Rs. 150/-. The original article was in English, so Master Ram Chander published its Urdu translation, serially from May to August 1850, in his *Muhibb-e-Hind*.

1. Maulvi Abdul Haq, *ibid.*, p. 67.
2. Sabri, *ibid.*, p. 218.

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The early Urdu newspapers are no doubt faithful mirrors of contemporary political situation but even periodicals like *Muhibb-e-Hind* occasionally provide us with useful information about how major political events were shaped by daily occurances. The British were no doubt greatly successful in their machinations and had already established an empire in the greater part of India by the middle of the nineteenth century. They had done so through a variety of means—open war, treachery, secret alliances, conspiracies and deceit. The majority of Indians worked in a way that helped the British. They entered into intrigues with them against each other. This part of our history is a continued story of national shame and dishonour. There are, however, a number of instances scattered here and there that go a long way in redeeming our national honour. There are many stories of heroic efforts and of supreme sacrifices made by Indians to retain national or regional freedom. The following extract dealing with one such incident that took place during the annexation of the Punjab by the British is taken from the pages of *Muhibb-e-Hind* (July and August 1850) and was written by Debi Singh.

> Ganga Ram Munshi, the Maharani (the mother of Maharaja Dilip Singh), Kehan Singh and Gulab Singh, etc. used to meet the soldiers of the British army and instigate them against the British. All these persons used to assemble in a certain house at night and hold mutual consultations about plans to kill Englishmen. It was decided by them that all the conspirators should come together at a certain place on 13 May 1848 and post ten persons each at the bunglows of Englishmen and kill them...The conspirators had promised to pay Rs. 60/- to each soldier. To some the payment had already been made.
>
> The conspirators had also bribed an Indian soldier of the Seventh Cavalry Regiment in the same way. He used to come to them everyday. When this soldier had learnt all the secrets of the conspirators, he revealed them to his officer. The Resident too was informed about the matter, who sent Lt. Siddon with some soldiers to the house where the conspirators had assembled at night on 7 May. The house was surrounded on all sides so well that no body

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could escape. All the conspirators were arrested. Ganga Ram, Kehan Singh and Gulab Singh were the Chief conspirators. An enquiry was held, and on 9 May, at a *durbar*, their guilt was proved and the three were ordered to be hanged.[1]

Patriotism, courage and sacrifice as well as treachery, deceit and betrayal have always been part of political life everywhere. Our country is no exception. Ja'fars and Sadiqs are a recurring feature of history in our country, specially during the years of national decline. The patriotic fervour too and heroic struggles inspired by patriotism have been in evidence. One such occasion was the Battle of Multan (12 January 1849) during the annexation of the Punjab. We are told, in the article referred to above, how a small contingent of Sikhs faced the British artillery with great courage, killed many officers and men and took away a good deal of British arms.[2]

In the following short extract taken from the February 1849 issue of *Muhibb-e-Hind* Master Ram Chander expresses his admiration for Hyder Ali, the father of Tipu Sultan who was one of the chief enemies of the Company government in India:

> Hyder Ali never allowed any one to tyrannize over his subjects. He was not intolerant towards the Hindu faith. He did not confiscate the *jagirs* traditionally held by Brahmins.
>
> (*Muhibb-e-Hind*, February 1849)

Master Ram Chander was a keen student and teacher of modern science. He had achieved particular distinction in the study and teaching of mathematics and had won international recognition in this field. Notwithstanding all this he was also a lover of literature and possessed a cultivated taste in poetry. It was because of his love for poetry that he published not only informative, historical and scientific articles in *Muhibb-e-Hind* but also some fine specimens of the work of contemporary poets. Thus the list of the contents of various issues of *Muhibb-e-Hind* compiled by different researchers includes the *ghazals* of Shah Nasir and Bahadur Shah 'Zafar' and some complimen-

1. Sabri, *ibid.*, pp. 324-25.
2. *Ibid.*

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tary verses in the *musaddas* form by Sheikh Ibrahim 'Zauq.' Some nine stanzas of this *musaddas* were published in *Muhibb-e-Hind*. These are the only extant stanzas of this *musaddas* and were reprinted in *Diwan-e-Zauq* by Maulvi Muhammad Husain Azad. The stanza beginning with the line, "*Sarir ara-e-gardoon jab talak sultan-e-khawar ho*" may be poorly translated as:

As long as the Sun-Emperor rules over the firmament,
And the Moon serves him as his Dastoor-e-A'zam,[1] Jupiter as Sadr-e-A'la,
Mercury as Mir Munshi, Venus as Nazir,
Saturn as Mir Imarat, Mars as Lashkar,

As long as the Seven Planets rule over the Seven Heavens,
May God this Bahadur Shah remain the ruler of Seven Kingdoms!

The *ghazals* of Bahadur Shah 'Zafar' published in *Muhibb-e-Hind* are among the poet's best. The poet has used difficult rhyme-schemes and metres. Each verse reveals his great control over the poetic medium. The 'terrain', so to say, is difficult but the poet has a smoothness and an expressiveness that are remarkable. The *ghazal* beginning with the couplet.

Jigar berishta-o-jan khasta, dil jigar, daregh!
Hazar hasrat-o-sad haif-o-sad hazar daregh!
(The liver roasted, the spirit tired, the heart wounded, alas!
A thousand longings, a hundred regrets and
a hundred thousand sorrows!)

is a good example of what oriental rhetoric calls "difficult or stony terrain."

The issues for the months of April, May and July 1850 contain some remarkable *ghazals* of two major contemporary poets—Shah Nasir and Sheikh Ibrahim Zauq. They have been composed in the style of Sheikh Imam Bakhsh Nasikh. They are examples of a kind of mental gymnastic that was so characteristic of Nasikh—arid though complex in thought and totally devoid of even the remotest touch of feeling.

1. Dastoor-e-A'zam etc.: designations of court officials during the late medieval period.

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The invasions of India by Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah did not make the country economically so weak as the slow but long exploitation of the country by the British. The trade which they had long been carrying on here had gradually but ruthlessly impoverished the country. Another source of the Company government's income was the annual tributes paid by the different native rulers. In *Muhibb-e-Hind* (February 1846) we find a brief summary of the income of the Company government from various sources:

Total land revenue from Bengal and Hindustan	Rs. 133405020
From Madras	Rs. 55571290
From Bombay	Rs. 28557440
Income from salt trade	Rs. 20607680
Income from opium trade	Rs. 11257275
Stamp paper	Rs. 2157600
Tributes (old)	Rs. 4790014
Tributes (New)	Rs. 8474490

Professor Qasim Ali Sajan Lal has in his book copied the list of contents of *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* 1847. Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui has mistakenly presented them as the contents of *Muhibb-e-Hind*. Here we present the correct table of contents of *Muhibb-e-Hind* (with grateful acknowledgements to Professor Khwaja Ahmad Faruqui):

Historical and Political Essays

An account of the city of Delhi; history of Ceylon; an account of King Abbas, the Emperor of Iran; history of the land of Oudh; history of the Kingdom of Punjab; an account of the excavation of a mosque near Kotla Feroz Shah; history of Bengal; history of the Mughal dynasty upto Aurangzeb; history of the Mughal dynasty from Shah 'Alam I to Emperor Bahadur Shah; history of the Kingdom of Bundi upto 1576; history of England; history of Kota; history of Jaipur; history of Iran; history of India according to Farishta; an account of the Company Bahadur; an account of the life of Nawab Hyder Ali Khan of Mysore; an account of the Kingdom of Kabul; the constitution of the British government; history of the land of Sind Thatha;

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an interesting account of ancient coins; an account of the Sultans of Multan; history of Kashmir; a short history of the Punjab war: an account of the city of Babylon; history of the lands of China; a short account of Bukhara; a brief account of the city of Gour, the capital of Bengal which is also known as Jannatabad; a short account of the city of Damascus and its people; a short account of the land of Egypt and its people; an account of Alexander the Great.

Biographical and Literary Essays

An account of a *mushaira* (poetic symposium); complimentary verses by Zauq; the *ghazals* of Jur'at; the *ghazals* of Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar (September, November 1847, October, November and December 1848, February, September and November 1849); a composition by Hakim Momin Khan Momin; a *mathnavi* called *Fasana-e-Ishq* by Afaq Mirza Muhammad Sultan Fateh-al-Mulk Bahadur; a ghazal by Shah Nasir; select verses by Mir Dard; an account of Julius Caesar of Rome; an account of Sir Isaac Newton; an account of Confucius; an account of Cicero; the art of rhetoric; Alexander the Great; the travels of Yusuf Khan Kambalposh.

Scientific and Sociological Essays

The education of Indians; the science of astronomy; an account of eclipses; an account of snowfall; an account of dyeing; an account of animals; the railways; an account of the body and mind of man; an account of matter; Chemistry; an account of comets; an account of wonderful animals; an account of agriculture and horticulture.

Miscellaneous Essays

An account of the order of *sadhus* (ascetics); ethics; dreams; an account of travels to the Himachal mountains; the pilgrimage of Haj in Islam; an account of the errors in the *Shastas* (religious scriptures) of Hindus.

The above were the contents of *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* and *Muhibb-e-Hind*, Delhi, from September 1847 to August 1850. The official report for 1848 gives us the information that its

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circulation was 56 which came down to 50 in 1849. It was further reduced to 33 in 1850. The official report for 1851 tells us:

> It is extremely regrettable that *Muhibb-e-Hind* closed down last year. It published very useful essays aimed at introducing the natives to European learning. It ceased publication mainly because of lack of patronage among the natives.[1]

Mufid-e-Hind

A journal called *Mufid-e-Hind* was issued from Delhi College on 15 April 1848. It was a fortnightly edited by Munshi Husaini and Pandit Ajudhya Prasad. It is mentioned in passing in the official report for 1848, and was probably closed down within a few months of its first publication as there is no mention of this journal in the official report for 1849. There is a note about this journal in *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, dated 17 April 1848:

> An advertisement about a new newspaper had been published in our journal a short while ago. The first issue of this newspaper has now been published (dated 15 April 1848) under the editorship of Munshi Husaini and Pandit Ajudhya Prasad. Both these gentlemen are teachers at Delhi College. May God give success to their venture.
>
> (*Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, Vol. 3, No. 16)

Tuhfat-al-Hadaiq

In 1848 another fortnightly was issued from Delhi College. This journal was published under the joint editorship of Muhammad Ja'far and Ali Taqi. It was priced at Re. 1/- per month. We learn the following from the June 1848 issue of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*:

> A newspaper called *Tuhfat-al-Hadaiq*, modern and useful, is printed at this press (matba'-al-Uloom). Its design is as follows: on the first page there is a detailed account of remedies; the second page deals with history; the third contains discussions of laws and government orders. The

1. Cited in Siddiqui, *Subah-e-Shumali wa Maghrabi Ke Akhbarat wa Matbu'at*, p. 110.

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last page gives news. The price is Re. 1/- monthly. Its editors are Mir Ja'far and Ali Taqi.

The official report, on the other hand, gives us the information: "*Tuhfat-al-Hadaiq* is issued twice a month by Saiyyid Muhammad, a Nagri (Hindi) teacher in the Oriental Department (of Delhi College)." It is possible that Saiyyid Muhammad might later have become the editor. Since there is no mention of this newspaper in the official report for 1849, it is likely that it did not survive long.

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5

Agra Newspapers

Zubdat-al-Akhbar, Agra

Compiling a history of early Urdu newspapers is nothing short of a heroic venture since not only are the early papers not extant but even basic information about them is not available. *Akhtar Shahenshahi*, a book compiled late in the nineteenth century, does no doubt give some account of early newspapers and printing presses but even these scanty descriptions may be found inauthentic and undependable in the light of modern research. They may not be trusted unless confirmed by contemporary evidence. This book gives the following account of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* which no doubt is inaccurate:

> *Zubdat-al-Akhbar*: 672, Agra, weekly, 4 pages, issued on 8 November 1853.

Natrajan has, however, given the following account of the newspaper in his *History of Indian Journalism*. This account is based on the government report:

> One of the first newspapers, the *Zoobdut-ool-Ukhbar*, was started in 1833 by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan in Persian. He was the editor and proprietor and commanded respect both for his tact and ability. His paper was subsidised monthly by five rulers and a rich merchant as follows:

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Raja of Bharatpur	Rs. 30
Raja of Alwar	Rs. 20
Nawab of Jhujjer	Rs. 15
Nawab of Jawarah	Rs. 10
Nawab of Hyderabad (Deccan)	Rs. 15
Seth Luchmee Chund	Rs. 15

These payments were made to secure the goodwill of the newspaper so that it might not publish matter which would lower the donors in public esteem. His receipt from monthly sales amounted approximately to Rs. 140. His expenses were computed at Rs. 40 per month leaving him a profit of approximately Rs. 200 independent of revenue from advertisements. Wajid Ali Khan was a cautious editor, rarely hazarding his own opinion or in any way laying himself open to attack. Expressions of dissatisfaction were rare and when indulged in, clothed in flowery language. His sources were the English and other newspapers. Wajid Ali Khan did not favour the Europeanised way of life and his conservatism, subtly expressed, appealed to his circle of readers. His conservatism had for its target periodicals edited under the auspices of Government educational institutions such as the *Sudder-ool-Akhbar*, the Agra College paper.[1]

An article in the journal *Zaban* (Delhi) gives the following account of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* on the basis of some details given in *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* (Mirzapur) which had published the government report for 1848:

No.	*Newspaper's Title*	*Place of Publication*
1.	*Zubdat-al-Akhbar*	Agra
Editor's Name		*Circulation*
Wajid Ali Khan		157

An interesting detail revealed by the official report is that *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* was, from the point of view of circulation, the second largest newspaper of the North-western province and the Punjab, the *Khair khwah-e-Hind* having the largest

1. J. Natrajan, *History of Indian Journalism*, p. 48.

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circulation. This report mentions 23 newspapers and periodicals in Urdu, Persian and Nagri languages. Among the chief contemporaries it mentions *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (Agra), *Saiyyid-al-Akhbar* (Delhi) and *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*. While the circulation of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* had reached 157 in 1848, that of its three contemporaries mentioned above was 52, 27 and 79 respectively. The fact suggests not only that Wajid Ali Khan was greatly respected among readers but also that he was a journalist of much ability having great insight, and with command over the use of Persian.

Munshi Wajid Ali Khan had a deep insight into, and understanding of, Persian grammar. He was also a gifted journalist. He combined a good prose style with a cultivated taste in poetry. He wrote poetry both in Persian and Urdu, and was quite popular.

Urdu grammar was a field in which Munshi Wajid Ali Khan took keen scholarly interest. He wrote a grammar of Urdu language called *Guldasta-e-Anjuman*, a counterpart, so to say, of *Darya-e-Latafat* by Insha, and Gilchrist's treatise on Urdu Grammar. An advertisement of the *Guldasta* was published in *As'ad-al-Akhbar*. Since the advertisement is a good introduction to Munshi Wajid Ali Khan's calibre as a scholar of Urdu grammar and his keen interest in the subject we give it here in full. The Urdu version is a fine specimen of smooth and polished prose style:

"Guldasta-e-Anjuman" by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan

> All of us know that Urdu has been in use in courts and in government offices for a long time, and also that all the documents relating to civil and criminal cases are written in this language. The use of Persian for these purposes has been given up completely. The court officials, however, had earlier been used to writing in the Persian language. This habit had become so deeply ingrained that whatever they now write in Urdu is virtually a translation of Persian. Their idiom is very unlike that of Urdu. Though Urdu is an Indian language yet there is in it a lot of difference between the spoken and written expression. Expressiveness in any piece of written language cannot be acquired without a

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careful and detailed study of the idiom of that particular language.

A good corpus of literature has now become available in the Urdu language such as *mathnavis* (verse tales in particular metres), *diwans* (poetic collections) and fiction etc. The authors of these works have used many idiomatic expressions with great delicacy and excellence. However, no book has so far been written, that would help non-Urdu-knowing people to learn the language correctly and idiomatically and to enable those who already know it to use it mare effectively. It is with this aim in view that I, the humble editor of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar*, have compiled a book that would be useful in the above manner. Its title is *Guldasta-e-Anjuman*. It would not be proper for me to praise my own book.

The book consists of twenty gatherings of thirteen-line pages. Its printing is going to start at Matba'-e-*Zubdat-al-Akhbar* this week and will be ready for sale within two or three weeks if there is no hurdle. The price of the book shall remain Rs. 4 from today till the 15th of March, and thereafter it will be increased a little. Let it not be considered too high a price, and do not desist from buying it since no one can really appreciate the hard work I have done in preparing it. I have tried to keep the price as low as possible bearing the loss myself. The late Mir Inshaullah Khan no doubt wrote a treatise called *Darya-e-Latafat* on the subject of Urdu idioms, and John Gilchrist too compiled a book on Urdu grammar. Those who have read both the books may compare them with the book I have now compiled and judge its relative merit.

The chapter division in the book is as follows: The first chapter deals with the alphabet and verb-roots derived from Hindi. The second chapter contains Hindi sayings used in Urdu speech. The third chapter deals with verb-roots and inflections. The next chapter contains idioms and allusions. In the fifth chapter I have given an account of Hindi grammar. The sixth chapter deals with rhetoric. The next chapter teaches the art of letter-writing, and the last is about the idioms current in Lucknow and Delhi.

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In another issue of *As'ad-al-Akhbar* the editor, Munshi Qamaruddin Khan, has commented on the book by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan in detail which brings out the importance of the book as well as helps us determine the latter's standing as a scholar:

> No better guide to the learning of Urdu (than this book) exists at present. The case of the Urdu language is a strange one: although it is the lingua franca of the country, there are very few people who know how to use it correctly. Maulvi Munshi Wajid Ali Khan whose learning and comprehensive knowledge are known throughout India has written a book that would, like a lamp, show the path to all the learners of Urdu.

The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* dated 24 September tells us that the book could not be published within the promised time. It could be completed only by September and the number of its pages too increased from 20 gatherings to 37. The price, however, was not increased. An interesting feature of the book was its chapter dealing with the art of letter-writing. Everybody knows that Ghalib was an innovator in this field. He rejected the traditional style of writing letters—rhymed, ornate, formal and full of flowery language. Maulana Hali has written in *Yadgar-e-Ghalib*: "He (Mirza Ghalib) started writing letters in Urdu perhaps after 1850." Another scholar, Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mehr, has controverted this statement and suggested that the date 1848 should be preferred. However, one thing is certain: Ghalib does not seem to have made any deliberate attempt to write his characteristic letters before 1850. Now, the letters given as models in the chapter on letter-writing were written earlier than the earliest of Ghalib's letters. However, before we draw any conclusions from all this, let us quote a complete specimen from *Guldasta-e-Anjuman*:

> Mir Sahib—Of Exalted Value. May God's blessings be on you! I have received one *bhengi* of mangoes kindly sent by you; they are safe. The number of mangoes which I have received is the same as mentioned by you in the letter. The truth is that the *kahar* who brought the *bhengi* did it with great care. He did not allow a single piece to be lost on the way. How excellent the mangoes are—even their thought

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makes the mouth begin to water! The lips begin to stick together at the thought of their sweetness. The *houri*, if they come to eat these fruits, would be unwilling to return to heaven. The Sendurya variety is no doubt sweet and delicious but the *haryal* (a variety of mangoes) is a different proposition altogether. Such delicious mangoes are not to be tasted in this part of the world nor could they be traced in other regions. My heart is full of their quality and is unable to express its gratitude to you. May God's grace bring happiness to you and keep you such for ever .

The letter quoted above fully reveals that Munshi Wajid Ali Khan had greatly simplified the complimentary terms then in use. At the same time we also find in it an unusual simplicity of language, so different from the rhymed prose and rhetorical expressions then in use. The language in these letters is smooth and plain and thus innovative. There is little doubt that Munshi Wajid Ali Khan was a pioneer in this field.

A study of *As'ad-al-Akhbar* also reveals that Munshi Wajid Ali Khan had written another book called *Matla'-al-Uloom wa Majma'-al-Fanoon* dealing with different arts and sciences. It was priced at Rs. 10.

Owing to the unusual ability as a journalist possessed by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan, the *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* reached great heights of popularity and became a greatly valued newspaper. This is proved by the fact that a large number of news in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* were reprinted from *Zubdat-al-Akhbar.*

It is impossible now to present a selection of news from *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* as not a single copy of the newspaper is extant. However, the style and descriptive ability possessed by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan can be appreciated from some selected news items reprinted, with acknowledgement to the *Zubdat-al-Akhbar*, in *As'ad-al-Akhbar.* It should not be forgotten that while the Zubdat-al-Akhbar was a Persian language newspaper, the *Asad-al-Akhbar* was published in Urdu:

News from Lucknow

According to *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* there is some bad blood these days between the Resident Bahadur and the Prime Minister (of Oudh). Wasi Ali Khan who had been exiled

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from Lucknow by orders of the Resident has again come back helped by some secret understanding between him and the Badshah (Nawab of Oudh). The Prime Minister is very unhappy about the Resident's coolness towards him and wants mutual cordiality restored. It is said that the Resident Bahadur would tour all the dominions in order to see for himself the condition of the subjects and the administration of the *Nazims*. The Badshah Salamat (the Nawab) is totally uninterested in the affairs of the Kingdom and is leading a life of ease in the palace.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Vol. 123)

News from Lucknow

The news from Lucknow is that there preparations are afoot for the reception of the Governor General. The Prime Minister would be there to receive him when the Governor General enters Kanpur. Recently Hazrat Sultani (the Nawab) went to the house of Vazir-al-Mumalik to attend celebrations. The activities indulged in there by the servants of the Nawab cannot be described in words. Their behaviour was worse than that of low-class musicians and singers.

News from Lucknow

A ietter from Lucknow tells us that these days the Badshah (the Nawab of Oudh) is unhappy with the Prime Minister. A number of reasons are suggested for this. The strongest reason perhaps is that the Minister is unable to carry on the affairs of the state. Whatever little revenue is received is spent on the deployment of the army. Everyone in the administration, from the Prime Minister down to Amils and Nazims, is self-seeking and selfish. No one is concerned with the welfare of the country. How then can the country be strong?

The trend of news presentation above shows a certain forthrightness and plainess that would indeed be unnerving for anyone who became the object of the editor's attention in an unsympathetic manner. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that such forthrightness must have been the source of the

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financial support Munshi Wajid Ali Khan received from rulers of native states.

The *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* closed down towards the end of 1853 or in the beginning of 1854 since the official report for 1853-54 tells us: "*Zubdat-al-Akhbar* (Persian) that was being issued under the editorship of Munshi Wajid Ali Khan for twenty years continuously has now closed down".

Sadr-al-Akhbar, Agra

It was the first Urdu newspaper from Agra and was also known as *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* and *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq wa Ta'lim-al-Khaliq*. It was issued by a British professor of Agra College, Mr. C. Finck. With a view to overcoming financial problems Mr. Finck had sold shares of Rs. 5 each among 200 people connected with Agra College. In this way he had collected a good amount with which to run the newspaper. The aim behind issuing this paper was to encourage the students of Agra College to acquire a better understanding of modern science and to increase their general awareness. It was for this reason that the newspaper published news and articles relating to general knowledge and modern science.

The successor of Mr. Finck did not remain the editor for a long period as he started publishing objectionable articles in the newspaper. He was soon removed. The next editor was Dr. Felin.

When Dr. Felin took over as editor is not known. It is however clear from the official report for 1848 that he certainly was the editor in that year. We also learn from the report that 102 copies of the newspaper were in circulation.

It is interesting that Dr. Felin too got involved in the kind of policy which had been responsible for the removal of his predecessor. Dr. Felin allowed certain articles to be published in the newspaper about an incident of cow-slaughter near Hardwar. These articles were found to be mischievous and aimed at inflaming eommunal passions. The editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed* of Meerut gave crushing replies to these articles. The College authorities were soon startled by thc passions roused by the controversy. They realized that such actions would adversely affect the interests of the College and might lead to

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the closure of the newspaper which otherwise was an effective instrument for the dissemination of knowledge.

The newspaper was published twice a week. Its circulation, however, was confined to the students and teachers of Agra College. Only a few copies were sold outside the College. The main reason for this was the fact that this newspaper concentrated only on the publication of essays on scientific subjects and those relating to general knowledge. The common people at that time had little interest in such things owing to their poor intellectual level and rigid traditionalism.

However, a study of contemporary newspapers reveals the fact that *Sadr-al-Akhbar* or *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* also published national and international news and essays on current affairs. The style of presentation, however, and the manner of chronicling events was of a higher standard that in other contemporary newspapers.

The government report reveals that the total monthly expenditure on the printing and publishing of the newspaper amounted to Rs. 100/- while the subscription price per copy was Re. 1/- It may be of some historical interest to learn something about the details of expenditure under different headings:

Item	*Expenditure*
Assistant Editor	Rs. 15/-
copyist	Rs. 10/-
accountant	Rs. 7/-
pressman	Rs. 5/-
2 coolies	Rs. 8/-
peon and chowkidar	Rs. 8/-
water-carrier	Rs. 0.12
paper	Rs. 22/-
miscellaneous	Rs. 6/-
postage	Rs. 8/-
house rent	Rs. 2/8
wear and tear	Rs. 2/-
contingencies	Rs. 5.00
Total	Rs. 99/4

The official report for 1849 reveals that the circulation had gone down that year. Dr. Felin also complained about the lack

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of interest shown by the common people in a newspaper that published good and informative articles.

The report for 1853 shows that the circulation of *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* had greatly declined. The report lists the following as the possible reasons for the decline:

1. In the early phase of Indian journalism only two or three newspapers would have been enough for a city like Agra. However, about eight newspapers were published from there with a naturally adverse effect on the circulation of each of these newspapers.
2. The nature of the contents of *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* might also be held responsible for its limited appeal. While the common people had a liking for sensational news, it published essays of a scientific and scholarly nature.
3. The circulation outside the city was extremely limited as the postage rates were very high. People could not subscribe to an expensive newspaper owing to their poverty.

Notwithstanding its limited circulation, it was greatly valued in learned circles and was greatly respected by contemporary newspapers. We find many news items quoted from *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* in various other contemporary newspapers like *Koh-i-Noor* (Lahore), *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (Agra) and *Sehr-e-Samari* (Lucknow). It is *As'ad-al-Akhbar* that gives us information about the complete name of *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq*, i.e. *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq wa Talim-al-Khalaiq*. We give in the following a few news items quoted from *As'ad-al-Akhbar* but indirectly derived from *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* with a view to acquainting the reader with the range and quality of news published in *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq*:

> A letter from Delhi informs us that Munshi Umarjan has already paid three lakh rupees for his release at Alwar but without effect. The poor victims of tyranny at Alwar are selling jewelry and property in Delhi in order to pay ransom at Alwar.
>
> (*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 121)

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The Emperor (of Delhi) had written a congratulatory letter to the Queen (of Britain) on the appointment of the heir apparent (Prince of Wales) to the throne. The letter passed through the hands of the Nawab Lt. Governor Bahadur who sent it back to the Resident at Delhi with the comment that direct communication between the Emperor and the Queen was not possible. The Nawab Lt. Governor will reach Delhi on 20 October. After staying there for two days he will start for Agra.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 124)

News from Lucknow

The letters from Lucknow show that rains have not as yet started there though it has been raining heavily in the neighbouring areas. Gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea have spread. There have even been a few cases of cholera. Plague has spread in the east.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 113)

News from Madras

The *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* reports that in this part of the country the Iron Ways (railways) are being laid. Cultivators are objecting to their construction as they might damage land and crops. It appears that these people are not aware of the advantages (of the railways), otherwise they would not have objected to it.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 103)

The Price of Grains

The prices of different grains as reported by *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq* are as follows:

Wheat per rupee: 34 seers; grams: 34 seers; rice: 20 seer; moong: 26 seer; arhar; 1 maund and 10 seer; mooth: 20 seers; jwar: 1 maund; bajra: 26 seer; jau: 1 maund and 10 seer; mustard: 31 seer; Til: 20 seers; masoor: 30 seer.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 115)

The *Al-Haqaiq* tells us that a man used to bring ice from America in a ship. He has been doing it for many years. He sold it in Calcutta at the price of two annas per seer.

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Another merchant has also started importing ice and he is selling it at 1 anna per seer. The wonder is how ice can be brought from a place which is eight to ten thousand miles away and sold at such a low price.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 126)

News from Lahore

The Islamic heirlooms preserved in the treasury of the Maharaja shall, by a government order, be now given to some Saiyyid. In the past some Nawab had offered to pay the Maharaja a few lakh rupees in return for these heirlooms but the latter was not willing to part with them.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 150)

There is the following news item in *Koh-e-Noor* (Lahore) from *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq*, Agra:

News about the Emperor of Delhi

Many people would recall how once the Governor General of India had sought a meeting with the Emperor with the request that he be allowed to sit on a *chowki* near the throne of the Emperor. The request was not granted. Consequently, the Governor General asked the British government to suspend the allowance paid to the Emperor by the Company government. Now the advisers of the Emperor want that the matter be reopened with the government in London.

(*Koh-e-Noor*, Lahore, 19 September 1854)

The *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq wa Ta'lim-al-Khalaiq* continued to be published till the great upheaval of 1857. It was closed down during those eventful days.

As'ad-al-Akhbar, Agra

As'ad-al-Akhbar was first issued a year after the first issue of *Sadr-al-Akhbar*. It was also published from Agra. There is difference of opinion among researchers as to the exact date of its first issue. Siddiqui, following Kaifi, says the following on the subject:

As'ad-al-Akhbar was issued from Agra in May 1847. It was a weekly newspaper published by Munshi Qamaruddin

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Khan from Phanti Bazar. The subscription rate was eight annas monthly excluding postage. Like other contemporary newspapers, the *As'ad-al-Akhbar* too was printed at its own printing press.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* too mentions this newspaper: "*As'ad-al-Akhbar*—106, Agra. Proprietor Munshi Qamaruddin. Issued in January 1847". Qazi Abdul Wuddod has disagreed with these views. He has the following to say on the subject:

> *As'ad-al-Akhbar* was published from Agra. Its editor was Qamaruddin Khan. The first number was probably issued on Monday 22 Jamadi-al-Aakhir 1263 A.D. or 7 June 1847 A.D.....A glance at the extant issues shows that it was published even on festival days.

Qazi Abdul Wudood seems to be correct since his theory is also confirmed by another piece of evidence. Ahsan Marehravi in his *Tarikh-e-Nasr-e-Urdu* has given the details of one of the issues of *As'ad-al-Akhbar*. The details are as follows: "*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Vol. 1, No. 4. 28 June 1847, Saturday". Calculating from these details, we arrive at the conclusion that the first number must have been published on 7 June 1847. This calculation thus disproves Siddiqui's view that the first issue was published in May 1847.

The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* was printed on white paper of $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$ size. It consisted of 4 pages of 2 columns each. The first two pages were always reserved for Islamic history. The following passage was always printed at the top:

> In this newspaper the history of the times of the Prophet and his companions, beginning with the incident of "Ashab-e-feel", is printed in brief instalments. When, with the grace of God, we have completed this account we will go on to later events relating to the holy family, the early Caliphs, the painful tragedy of Karbala and the twelve Imams. We will give a truthful account of all these personages and events so that they become known to the common people.

Munshi Qamaruddin Khan gives the following account of the Battle of the Trench. The passage brings to light the qualities of Qamaruddin Khan's journalistic style:

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The Battle of the Trench was a strange and difficult conflict. The infidels would come in batches, beating drums, and move in the direction of the Prophet's tent. God, however, never gave them strength enough to cross the trench. The brave companions of the Prophet would courageously face their challenge. The Prophet himself would walk about in the cold of the night to defend the trench. Aisha Siddiqua tells us how the Prophet would sometimes return to the tent at night because of the cold; she would light a fire, and when he was warm enough again he would return to the trench. One night when he was warming himself before a fire in the above manner, he heard the sound of arms outside the tent. When asked who he was, the man outside replied that it was Sa'd Bin Wiqas. The Prophet said, "Let Sa'd Bin Wiqas go to defend the trench". Sa'd heard this and went away to comply with the command.

In the first column of the third page of the newspaper, there used to appear an account of the life and teachings of philosophers of the early period. These accounts would sometimes be of one column and sometimes of half a column. The early philosophers were followed by those of the later period. When the series ended a new series began. This new series dealt with the teachings of the *sufis* (mystics) whose accounts were derived from the well-known book *Akhbar-al-Akhyar*. The following extract (about the Greek philosopher and physician Galen) is taken from No. 87 of *As'ad-al-Akhbar*:

> He (Galen) has said that knowledge is useless for the man who is without reason. He has also said that a sick person with good appetite is better than one who is healthy but has no appetite. Some of his other sayings are: "The worst young man is one without a sense of shame." "One who thinks himself to be the wisest is actually the most stupid." "The really meek is one who is capable of being a tyrant but is not."
>
> One day the philosopher saw a very strongly-built man being greatly respected by everyone. He asked them why they were showing so much respect to them. They said, "This man is so powerful that he lifted a dead cow from the ground holding it by the waist." The philosopher said,

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> "If lifting the weight of a dead cow is a reason for admiration then why do you not admire the cow itself which always carries about its weight?"

The maximum space left in the newspaper for news, advertisements, extracts from the government gazette and poetry was three and a half columns. The prime duty of a newspaper is to keep its readers informed about the world. How well this duty was discharged by the *As'ad-al-Akhbar* can be assessed by going through the following extracts:

News from Delhi

> The *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* writes on the authority of *Majma'-al-Akhbar* of Bombay that the application of Nawab Governor General Bahadur recommending the suspension of the heir apparent to the Mughal throne and also about revoking the Imperial title and other royal privileges has been received by the British government in London. It is being considered by the high authorities there. The Queen wants the titles and imperial privileges to continue in the Timurid dynasty. She also wants that the heir apparent be appointed according to the wishes of the Emperor. The officials of the Company government, however, think in a contrary manner and give arguments in support of their opinions. Let us see whose will prevails in the matter—that of Her Majesty or of the officials of the Company government.
>
> (*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 147)

News from Lucknow

The weather there is now returning to normal. There was plenty of rain. The epidemic of cholera has completely died out. The latest news is that Hazrat Sultani (the Nawab of Oudh) has turned his attention to the composition of poetry these days. He is planning to translate into Urdu verse the well-known book *Hamla-e-Haideri*. A number of learned men and calligraphers have therefore been appointed to be always present to prepare the manuscript. The editor of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar*, however, thinks that the right thing for a ruler to do is to "compose order" in a state and not to

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compose poetry. His Highness had better leave the work of translation to the poet laureate, Qazi Muhammad Sadiq Khan Akhtar and devote himself to the work of administration. Both would thus be the gainer: the translation would be of a higher quality and the administration would certainly improve. What an excellent opinion this is!

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 118)

Foreign News

It has been learnt from foreign newspapers that there is a country called Mexico in the island of America (sic.). The people of Mexico had been at war with those of America for a year. The Americans have finally won. They have seized from the Mexicans a land called California. There, a merchant dug a hole in the earth one day. He found grains of gold in the earth. The people there were surprised and thought there was a gold mine. Search revealed that there was an area fifty miles long and of about the same width where gold was scattered. There they found grains of gold ranging in size from a gram to half a seer. The British (the Americans?) have not so far taken the land under their control as it is very far from the capital and has only recently been annexed. It will probably be brought under control soon.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 94)

Occasionally books were also advertised in *As'ad-al-Akhbar*. A representative list of such advertisements includes the *Panj Ahang* by Ghalib, *Diwan-e-Niaz Barelvi* (Persian), *Sikandar Nama* (Urdu) by Saiyyid Azam Ali, *Miftah-al-Tawarikh*, *Guldasta-e-Anjuman* and *Matla'-al-Uloom wa Majma'-al-Funoon* by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan, *Diwan-e-Tafta* by Mirza Hargopal Tafta and *Tazkira Gulistan-e-Bekhizan* by Hakim Qutbuddin Batin. etc. Below, we give two advertisements which may be of interest to students of the history of Urdu literature:

"Diwan-e-Tafta"

Diwan-e-Tafta is being printed at our press these days. It is the same *Diwan* that had been advertised in this paper

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during the closing days of 1847. It had then to be postponed owing to pressure of work.

Among the later Persian poets (of our country) there have been few who can be compared with Tafta. Considering his purity and smoothness of diction, Tafta may easily be called the Saib of our age, and his birthplace, Sikandera-bad, may be regarded as Isfahan.

The details of the printing are as follows: imported, polished paper; 21 line page; *nasta'liq* style of calligraphy; consisting of more than 45 gatherings. The *Diwan* contains more than fifteen thousand verses. The price at present is Rs. 4 but will be increased to Rs. 4.8 annas after two months. Still later it will be further increased to Rs. 5. Requests along with the price may be sent to this printing house; the *diwan* will be sent per V.P.P. after the printing is complete...

Hakim Qutbuddin Batin wrote a kind of a reply to the well-known *Tazkirah* (chronicle history of poetry) of Nawab Mustafa Khan Shaifta, *Gulshan-e-Bekhar*. Batin's *Tazkirah* was called *Gulistan-e-Bekhizan*. An advertisement of the same was published in *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 119.

"Tazkirah Gulistan-e-Bekhizan", etc.

The present humble writer has compiled a *Tazkirah* of poets called *Tazkirah Gulistan-be-Khizan* in reply to *Tazkirah Gulshan-e-Bekhar* of Nawab Muhammad Mustafa Khan Dehlavi Shaifta. The pattern of this *Tazkirah* is entirely contrary to that of Shaifta's. He had shown contempt for certain poets and ignored many of them by excluding their names from his *Tazkirah*. He had also given too much praise to himself and his friends. The present humble writer has given equal praise to all according to their status. Those who have read (Shaifta's) *Gulshan-e-Bekhar* would realize how justly the present writer has dealt with the poetry of the former. The book consists of 24 gatherings and its price will be Rs 3. Those interested in buying it may send their application (without the money) at the following address: Muhalla Katra Umar Khan, Taj Ganj (Agra). The price may be paid after the book is ready after printing.

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We find references to, and extracts from, the following newspapers in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* from 1848 to 1851:

Akhbar-al-Haqaiq wa Ta'lim-al-Khalaiq (Agra); *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* (Agra); *Nuzhat-al-Arwah wa Akhbar-al-Nawah* (Agra); *Qutub-al-Akhbar* (Agra); *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* (Agra): *Jam-e-Jamshed* (Agra); *Matla'-al-Akhbar* (Agra); *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*; *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* (Delhi); *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* (Delhi): *Koh-e-Noor* (Lahore); *Darya-e-Noor* (Lahore); *Majma'-al-Akhbar* (Bombay); *Aftab-e-Alamtab* (Madras); *Rais-al-Akhbar* (Madras); *Jam-e-Jamshed* (Meerut); *Miftah-al-Akhbar* (Meerut); *Akhbar Muhtashim* (Jawarah); *'Umdat-al-Akhbar* (Bareilly); *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* (Mirzapur); *Simla Akhbar* (Simla); *Bagh-o-Bahar* (Benaras), etc.

The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* was certainly published till 11 May 1857 since the May 1857 issues of *Sehr-e-Samari* (Lucknow) published contain extracts from it. The printing house of the newspaper did certainly survive the events of 1857 since one of its publications—*Intikhab-e-Jalali* (printed at Matba'-e-*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, 1859) is present in the Lytton Library of Aligarh Muslim University. It is difficult to say if the newspaper continued publication after 1857.

Matla'-al-Akhbar, Agra

The publication of *As'-ad-al-Akhbar* proved a good augury for Urdu journalism in Agra. Earlier, there were only two newspapers published from Agra—the *Zubdat-al-Akhbar* and *Sadr-al-Akhbar*. Immediately after *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, a number of new newspapers came to be issued from Agra one after the other.

A little while after the issue of *As'ad-al-Akhbar* Shaikh Khadim Ali started the publication of an Urdu newspaper called *Matla'-al-Akhbar*. It was a weekly newspaper with limited circulation; only 36 copies were printed. Inspite of its limited circulation, however, it continued to be published till May 1857. There are extracts from it in *Sehr-e-Samari* of Lucknow (dated 18 May 1857). There are extracts from it also in *Koh-e-Noor* (Lahore) and *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (Agra). The following news was quoted in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* from *Matla'-al-Akhbar*:

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The *Matla'-al-Akhbar* gives the following details about the attack by the British and Imperial forces on the stronghold of the rebels. Of the British forces a lieutenant and ten soldiers were killed and twenty five injured. Eleven soldiers of the artillery were also killed. Of the Imperial forces seventy were killed. All the rebels consisting of 500 men were killed. They were defeated at night.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 153)

A prince belonging to the royal Timurid dynasty calling himself the son of Mirza Sulaiman Shikoh has come to Bhopal in abjectly miserable condition. He intends going to Karbala-e-Mu'alla and Mecca. The Mukhtar (of Bhopal) state has granted him forty rupees. The gentleman must be around sixty in age and is extremely weak in body.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 106)

Guldasta Me'yar-al-Sho'ra, Agra

The first literary *guldasta* (anthology) in India was published from Agra in 1848. It was called *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*. It was a fortnightly published like a newspaper on 4 pages. The price was 4 annas monthly excluding postage. An advertisement had been issued before its publication. This was printed in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* (Delhi):

A *mushaira* (poetic symposium) is held every fortnight at the house of the present writer. Since all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood cannot attend it, it was decided to publish all the *ghazals* of a particular mushaira, like a newspaper, on two or three printed pages. Not many people are familiar with prosody. Therefore, the last half page is reserved for an analysis of metre etc. The *guldasta* will also print a brief account of the poets' life, so gradually a *tazkirah* of contemporary poets would be ready. In public interest the price has been fixed at 4 annas monthly which is just enough to defray the expenses of printing and the cost of the paper. If the number of *ghazals* increase and an additional page or two have to be added then the price may be proportionately increased. The *misra'-e-tarah* (the proposed metre) for the next *mushaira* will always be printed at the end of the report of the previous *mushaira*. Hence

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this advertisement is published to inform the prospective subscribers of the proposed paper called *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*. Such subscribers may send their application to the writer at Agra College. The postage will have to be paid by the subscriber. The first issue will come out on Tuesday, 21 November. Advertised by Abul Hasan, teacher of Persian, Agra College, Agra, Dated 11 November 1848.

(*Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, Vol. 3, No. 23, 13 November 1848)

Under the heading "the Opinion of the Editor," Master Ram Chander pointed out that it would be the first such newspaper in the country, the first literary *guldasta*. He wrote:

In fact the newspaper called *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* to be issued by Maulvi Sahib will be an excellent newspaper. No paper of this kind has ever been published. The price too is very low. The fact is that the editor of this newspaper, Maulvi Abul Hasan, is a learned and serious-minded person. Anyone wishing to subscribe to this newspaper may send his application either to Maulvi Sahib at his Agra College address or to me.

The Editor, *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*.

Though the advertisement in *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* had promised that the *Guldasta* would be issued on 21 November, this could not be done. The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* dated 11 December 1848 shows that the *Guldasta* had not appeared till then. The reasons for this delay are not known.

Mushaira Akbarabad: On the night of 9 December a *Mushaira* was held at the house of Munshi Abul Hasan, teacher class I of Persian, Agra College. The poems recited there will be published in *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, 11 December 1848)

Garcin de Tassy has mentioned *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* in his description of Agra newspapers: "*Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* is a literary journal that publishes poems by old and new poets." At another place he says: "*Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* is a collection of the works of old and new authors published from Agra twice a week and edited by Munshi Qamaruddin Qamar and Gulab Khan." This statement is not correct. There are two factual errors in it. (1) The *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* was published fortnightly,

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not twice a week. (2) The editor of the paper was Munshi Abul Hasan and not the two persons mentioned by de Tassi. The fact is that the newspaper was printed at *As'ad-al-Akhbar* owned by Munshi Qamaruddin. Thus Munshi Qamaruddin was not the editor of *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*. It is possible that Gulab Khan might have become the editor or one of the editors in 1852.

The issue of *As'ad-al-Akhbar* dated 25 June 1849 suggests yet another name for the editorship of *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*:

> A *mushaira* was held the night before last. Most of the poets from Akbarabad and some Iranian poets too were present at the *mushaira*. Those who could not attend it may read the ghazals in *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* printed at our printing house and ably arranged and decorated (edited) by Saiyyid Madad Ali Tapish. Only selected *ghazals* of each poet are published (in it). The monthly subscription rate of the journal is four annas. Applications may be sent either to Saiyyid Madad Ali Tapish at his house in Muhalla Zin Khana or to our printing press.

A reference to *As'-ad-al-Akhbar* also reveals the fact that *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* published not only *ghazals* (Urdu and Persian) but other forms of poetry as well—*mathnavis*, *qasidas*, *qat'ats* and *shahr ashoobs*. Usually the paper consisted of 4 pages. The number of pages, however, could be increased, sometimes upto eight, according to requirements.

Qutb-al-Akhbar, Agra

Another newspaper called *Qutb-al-Akhbar* was issued from Agra towards the close of 1848. It was edited by Munshi Muhammad Amir Khan and printed at *Matba'-e-Qadiri*. These facts are confirmed by the government report. Qazi Abdul Wudood, too, has given the following details: '*Qutb-al-Akhbar*, Agra (issued towards the close of December 1848): "The editor is Munshi Muhammad Amir Khan. It is beautifully and carefully printed."'

The *Qutb-al-Akhbar* was double in size of *As'ad-al-Akhbar*. It was printed on 8 pages of $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$ size. Generally, it printed news only but occasionally there used to be *ghazals* too. Qazi Abdul Wudood says:

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The last two pages of this issue contain the Persian *ghazal* of Ahmad Khan Sufi and the *tarahi ghazals* (ghazals in prefixed metre) of Valiullah Zia, Raza Ali Hosh, Muhammad Yar Khan, Niaz Muhammad Khan (and others).

Garcin de Tassy too has mentioned *Qutb-al-Akhbar*:

> Another newspaper has been issued from the same city (Agra). Its name is *Qutb-al-Akhbar*. It generally deals with issues relating to the Islamic faith. It publishes accounts of the Prophets, the martyrs of Karbala and other exalted personages. Extracts from classics are also published in it.

Akhbar-al-Nawah, Agra

Akhbar-al-Nawah, an Urdu newspaper was issued from Agra in early 1849. Its full title was *Nuzhat-al-Arwah wa Akhbar-al-Nawah*. It was edited by Hakim Jawahar Lal and printed by him at Matba'-e-Sadrunnawadir. The government report also gives the information that it was issued to promote the cause of the welfare of the Hindus. Its circulation had reached 43 towards the close of 1849. Qazi Abdul Wudood makes the following statement about it with reference to *As'-ad-al-Akhbar*:

> It was issued early in 1849. The editor was Hakim Jawahar Lal. According to Qamaruddin Khan, the editor of *As'-ad-al-Akhbar*, "it is printed in a remarkably beautiful manner."

The official report too mentions 1849 as the date of its first issue. It follows *Qutb-al-Akhbar* in the report.

Like its contemporaries, the *Akhbar-al-Nawah* too is not extant. There are, however, extracts from it in contemporary newspapers like *Koh-e-Noor* (Lahore), *Sehr-e-Samari* (Lucknow) and *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (Agra). We quote the following from *As'ad-al-Akhbar* as specimens indirectly to indicate the range and quality of the news published in *Akhbar-al-Nawah*:

> A person from Lucknow writes to the editor of *Delhi Gazette* in the following manner: You have raised the question if the Company government would return the state of Oudh to the Nawab or keep it itself after improving the administration. In my opinion the Company would not take

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away the state from the Nawab since he has always been a friend and ally. He was with us in the Burma and Nepal wars, and never did anything that was harmful to our interest. We had given this state to the Nawab in 1760. In 1801 Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan gave away his state to us permanently: the net grains from it annually were one crore twenty five lakh rupees. The revenue has now increased about three times...Shall treaties be revoked only because the persons who entered into them have died? Shall they not be binding on the succeeding generation? Besides, Col. Sleeman's behaviour suggests that the Company government does not want to take away the state; he only wants the Nawab to appoint a better Prime Minister...The man selected by Col. Sleeman for the post is really deserving This is certainly true that Col. Sleeman is a little worried about the illness of the Nawab but this should not cause any misgiving as the Governor General has already appointed the second son of the Nawab as the heir apparent.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 127)

Though Sultan Wajid Ali Shah was actually deposed in 1856, the news about such a possibility had been going the rounds for five or six years earlier. The news item quoted above captures the mood of the time quite faithfully. It shows the helplessness of the Sultan and the political power and supremacy of the Company government The following news item too reveals a similar situation:

It appears that the Nawab Governor General Bahadur has not appreciated the idea of the appointment of a Board of Administration in the Punjab. It is because he does not want an arrangement which is of no utility to the government. It is likely that Lt. Thomson may be appointed as the Madar-al-Maham of the Punjab.

(*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 145)

In *As'ad-al-Akhbar* No. 149 the news of the suicide of the Nawab of Murshidabad was printed. It was actually borrowed from *Akhbar-al-Nawah*:

The *Akhbar-al-Nawah* writes with reference to *The English-*

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man that the wife of Nawab Raza Khan of Murshidabad died of smallpox. Overwhelmed with sorrow the Nawab swallowed poison and thus committed suicide. The newspaper further writes that the mother of the Nawab too had died in a similar manner about two and a half years ago.

Among the subjects most popular with newsmen and readers alike during the early years of Urdu journalism in the nineteenth century were those focusing on the relations between the native rulers and the Company government, and, secondly, those relating to inventions and discoveries. One can easily imagine the sense of wonder evoked by news of technological developments in a pre-industrialised, feudal society. The following news was quoted in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* from *Akhbar-al-Nawah*:

> The ingenious European have recently invented a new kind of printing machine. The new machine works automatically without human manipulation propelled by the power of steam. It can print not less than twenty five thousand copies of a paper in a day.
>
> (*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 122)

Garcin de Tassy too has mentioned *Akhbar-al-Nawah*, adding the information that earlier it was a learned journal but had later become an ordinary newspaper. The *Sehr-e-Samari* tells us that the *Akhbar-al-Nawah* was being published even in 1857.

Me'yar-al-Sho'ra, Agra

Another *guldasta* or serialised anthology of poetry was issued from Agra in 1849 or early 1850. The following was published in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (dated 24 December 1849) relating to this *guldasta*:

Mushaira Akbarabad

Another *mushaira* (poetic symposium) has been instituted in Peepal Mandi locality. It is attended by the established poets of the city. The *Mir-e-Mushaira* (the Chief of the symposium) intends to get the *tarahi ghazals* published in a fortnightly paper. The subscription rate has been fixed at

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four annas per copy. The paper can be had by writing to Nazir Bansi Dhar at the house of Jagat Narayan.

The attempt to learn a little more about "Nazir Bansi Dhar" would take us into interesting by-lanes of Urdu literary history. One of Ghalib's letters (addressed to Munshi Shiv Narayan Aram Akbarabadi) reads as follows:

> Let it be known to dear Munshi Shiv Narayan that I was totally ignorant about who he was. When I came to know that you were the grandson of Nazir Bansi Dhar, I realized that you were like my own son. I would now be committing a sin by addressing you in a formal way as if you were my equal. What do you know about the relationship between your family and mine! Let me instruct you in the matter.
>
> Your great grandfather was a companion of Khwaja Ghulam Husain Khan, my maternal grandfather during the days of Najaf Khan Hamadani. At the time my grandfather retired from service and preferred to sit at home, your great grandfather too did the same and never sought any employment again. Of course, all this happened long before I came of age. However, as I grew up I found Munshi Bansi Dhar in Khan Sahib's company, and when the latter filed a suit with the government about his estate, Munshi Bansi Dhar was the *munsarim* and acted as pleader and *mukhtar*. We were of the same age. May be Munshi Bansi Dhar was a year or two older than me—or younger. I was nearing twenty, and so was he. What united us was love and affection, and chess! We used to be together till midnight. His house was not far away, and so he would go home at whatever time he liked.

Thus we learn that Nazir Bansi Dhar was the grandfather of Munshi Shiv Narayan Aram, and also that the former had been the boon companion of Mirza Ghalib. Malik Ram, our contemporary authority on Ghalib, has the following to say about Munshi Shiv Narayan:

> Munshi Shiv Narayan was born in Agra on 10 September 1833. His mother died when he was very young. He was thereafter brought up by Munshi Kanhaiya Lal, the younger

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brother of his grandfather. Aram was very well educated. After his early education he was admitted to Agra College. There he learnt English and Persian. In English he was the disciple of the well-known lexicographer, the compiler of English-Urdu dictionary, C.V. Felin. Having completed his education, he became a lecturer in English in the same College at a monthly salary of Rs 35. He did not take any part in the 1857 struggle. On the contrary he helped the British officers and was, therefore, given two months' salary as an award when normalcy was restored.

The above statements prove that this second *guldasta* was issued by Nazir Bansi Dhar, the grandfather of Munshi Shiv Narayan, one of the correspondents of Ghalib. It had nothing to do with the other *guldasta* described earlier and edited by Maulvi Abul Hasan. The only link between the two might be that the later *guldasta* was probably issued in imitation of the earlier and that both were priced at four annas per copy.

It is probably because of a misunderstanding that Siddiqui has mixed up the identity of the two *guldastas*. Just as there were a number of *Sadiq-al-Akhbars* published from Delhi, there could easily be two *Me'yar-al-Sho'ras* from Agra. However, in the letters of Mirza Ghalib there is no mention of any *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* before 1859. The Mirza refers to *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* not only once or twice but many times in his letters (after 1859). In one of his letters to Munshi Shiv Narayan he writes:

My Blessings to Dear Munshi Shiv Narayan.

Now tell me if your newspaper or *Me'yar-al Sho'ra* is sent to the Nawab of Rampur or not. In the current issue of *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* I came across the comment that a poet with the name of Amir sends his *ghazals* to you and wants them published in your *guldasta*. You have also written that you are not going to publish them till you know more about that gentleman. Now I tell you that the gentleman concerned is a friend of mine, with the name of Amir Ahmad. His poetic name is Amir. He is a man of some social standing from Lucknow and has been personally known to, and was a companion of, the Nawabs of that city. At present he is in the company of the Nawab of Rampur. I am sending his *ghazals* to you. Publish them with

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my name. What I mean is that you should indicate in the paper that the *ghazals* came to you through me and that it was I who introduced him to you. I have already given you the details about him. Publish this account in *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* and send a two sheet or four-sheet copy of it to him at Rampur. Write the following address on the envelope: "To Maulvi Amir Ahmad Sahib Amir at the Court at Rampur." Let me thereafter learn if your paper is sent to Rampur or not.

Ghalib
Sunday, 12 June 1859

In the light of the above-quoted letter a few facts can be easily ascertained. It can be asserted that in 1859 Munshi Shiv Narayan published a newspaper (*Mufid-e-Khalaiq*) and an anthology of poetry called *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* under his editorship. The *guldasta* generally consisted of four pages, but the number of pages could occasionally be increased to eight. It published not only *ghazals* but also accounts of the poet's lives, and that these accounts were published after careful scrutiny.

The reader might get the impression that the *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* was published under the editorship of Munshi Shiv Narayan right from the beginning. This, however, is improbable. At the time of the first issue of *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*, Munshi Shiv Narayan must have been only sixteen years old, and probably he then was a College student. Moreover, it is evident from a reference to *As'ad-al-Akhbar* that in the beginning this *guldasta* was published under the patronage of Nazir Bansi Dhar and the editorship of Munshi Jagat Narayan. Munshi Jagat Narayan, let it be noted, was not the father of Munshi Shiv Narayan. In fact, the name of Munshi Shiv Narayan's father was Munshi Nand Lal who was, according to Malik Ram, "in the beginning a Nazir in the *Munsifi* and then became the Mukhtar-e-'Am in the court of Raja Jyoti Prasad. Mirza Hargopal Tafta wrote an elegy on his death which was published in his *Diwan*."

Munshi Shiv Narayan was appointed a teacher of English at Agra College after he had completed his higher education. As has already been pointed out he took no part in the calamitous events of 1857. In fact, he helped the British officers,

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and was rewarded with two months' salary for his services. However, Munshi Shiv Narayan did not for long continue to serve Agra College. He resigned his teaching assignment and joined the excise department.

It was in 1856 that he founded a printing house known as Matba'-e-Mufid-e-Khalaiq and the same year he began to publish a newspaper of the same name.

It is not known where the *guldasta Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* was printed in the beginning. It can, however, be said with conviction that after 1856 it began to be published at *Matba'-e-Mufid-e-Khalaiq*. In that year it was certainly edited by Munshi Shiv Narayan. It was in his press that two of Ghalib's works—*Dastamboo* (1858) and *Diwan-e-Urdu* (1863)—were printed.

Ghalib has referred to *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* in a number of his letters. Only two extracts may be sufficient. He writes to Mirza Hatim Ali Mehr:

> Mirza Sahib,
>
> I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed the verses of the *Mathnavi* which I saw. If it is continued in the same manner it will become an Urdu classic. May God give you long life. Your presence is a blessing. I ask you why you published your letter in *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*? What did you gain from it? Listen to me: if everyone's poetry is excellent, where would distinctions remain?

This extract shows that letters too were published in *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra*: they might probably have been verse-letters. In another letter Ghalib writes to Munshi Shiv Narayan:

> Let dear Munshi Shiv Narayan, of Exalted Destiny, know with good wishes that I am in receipt of a copy of *Baghawat-e-Hind* and a two-sheet copy of *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* through dear Shahabuddin Khan. Today is Thursday, the 14th of March and (I have learnt) a copy of *Baghawat-e-Hind* sent by you has reached Rampur. May God keep you alive.

The *Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* is referred to in Ghalib's letters till 1860. It suggests that it was certainly being published in that year. It is difficult to say how long it remained in existence after that date.

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Government Gazette, Agra

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has described the *Government Gazette* in the following words:

> This *Gazette* was issued under the editorship of Pandit Kesri Das by Maulvi Hasan Bakhsh, Mir Munshi in the office of Session Judge, Mainpuri, from Matba'-e-Faujdari, Kachehri compound, Faujdari of Agra City. The annual subscription rate was Rs. 9. It was first issued on Thursday, 13 March 1856, and consisted of eight average size pages. Its printer was Munshi Shiv Narayan, the proprietor of Akhbar *Mufid-e-Khalaiq*, Agra. After 19 November 1859 it was shifted to Allahabad.

Siddiqui too has included the *Government Gazette* in his list of Agra newspapers and referred to 1852 as its year of first issue. The *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, however, does not confirm this. The following news was published in the issue of 17 September 1849:

> Rev. J.J. Muir, the translator of laws in the *Government Gazette* died at Agra on 10 September 1849. He has left no issues, and his place has been taken by Mr. Ledlie.

This would suggest that the *Gazette* was in existence in 1849 and that it published Urdu translation of official legislation. Another extract from *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (No. 187) would further clarify the matter:

> Advertisement from G.B. Ledlie Sahib Bahadur, translator *Government Gazette*, Agra: The subscription rate of *Government Gazette* has been Rs. 14 annually since 1851...

In the light of the above extracts it is not difficult to decide whether the *Government Gazette* had been first issued in 1852 or was already in existence earlier.

Akhbar Nur-al-Absar, Agra

Siddiqui makes the following statement in his book on the publications and newspapers of the north-west province:

> Information has been provided about some newspapers of north India in the official report for 1849-50, and in this

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connection separate reference has been made to two Allahabad-based newspapers: *Budhi Prakash* (Hindi) and *Nur-al-Absar* (Urdu). The details given are as follows: The government buys, on an experimental basis, two hundred copies each of both the newspapers. The actual number of subscripers of *Nur-al-Absar* is 37 while that of *Budhi Prakash* is 15. 7 copies of the Urdu newspaper and 2 copies of the Hindi newspaper are sent in exchange. The editor of both the newspapers was Sukh Lal whose command of all the three languages--English, Urdu and Hindi—was highly praised in the report.

The above statement is probably based on a misunderstanding since the two newspapers mentioned in the official report were published from Agra, not from Allahabad. *Budhi Prakash* was actually the Hindi editon of *Nur-al-Absar* published under the editorship of Munshi Sada Sukh Lal.

Munshi Sada Sukh Lal was in fact the editor of both the newspapers. Siddiqui has misconstrued the name of the editor; it was not Sukh Lal but Sada Sukh Lal. Siddiqui has erred not only about the name of the editor and the place of publication of the two newspapers but also about its year of first issue since in the official report for 1849-50 there is no mention either of *Nur-al-Absar* or *Budhi Prakash*. In the report for 1849, *Qutb-al-Akhbar* and *Akhbar-al-Nawah* are described and not *Nur-al-Absar* or *Budhi Prakash*. The report for 1850 indicates that no new newspaper was issued from Agra that year. The truth in fact is that Natrajan has in his well-known book *A History of Indian Journalism* made the following statement after describing, on the basis of official report, the newly-issued newspapers of the year 1849-50:

> In the official report for the next three years, special mention was made of the allied publications from Benaras, *Aftab-e-Hind* (Urdu) and *Kashee-Barta-Prakshika* (Bengali), published by Kashee Nath as well-conducted periodicals containing ably written articles. Likewise Sada Sukh Lall's twin papers published from Agra, *Noor-al-Absar* (Urdu) and *Boodi Prakash* (Hindi) were acknowledged to be well-conducted, and a tribute was paid to the editor for his knowledge of English, the simple Urdu of the first paper and the

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pure Hindi of *Boodi Prakash*. The circulation breakdown for the two papers is as follows:

Newspaper	copies Purchased by Govern-ment	copies Exchanged	Paid Circulation
Noor-al-Absar	200	7	37
Boodi Prakash	200	2	15

Garcin de Tassy has described the two newspapers in his *Lectures*, and he too has referred to Agra as their place of publication:

> The new newspapers I have not as yet mentioned are as follows: *Nur-al-Absar* from Agra. Its editor is an able Hindu who is proficient in the use of English and is the author of a number of books. He is also the editor of a Hindi newspaper, meant for Hindus. It is known as *Budhi Prakash*. Both of these newspapers have been eminently popular since they publish interesting essays and news. They also publish well-informed articles on subjects relating to history, geography, geology and education. Most of the articles etc. in the newspaper are written in a pure style. Big and pompous words and an ornate and formal diction, so popular in the Orient, are generally avoided in these newspapers.

Another statement made by de Tassi indicates that the two newspapers continued to be published even after 1857: "The *Nur-al-Absar* and *Budhi Prakash* have been in circulation from Agra for a number of years..."

The news items, published in *Sehr-e-Samari*, are given below to indicate, rather indirectly, the range and quality of news coverage in *Nur-al-Absar*:

China

> A correspondent from Hong Kong writes in the English *Times* that Russia and China have entered into a treaty. According to the terms of the treaty a part of a Chinese island has been given to the Russians. They have also been given trading rights with foreign countries through that

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island. In exchange the Russians have agreed to defend China against external agression.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 29 December 1856; copied from *Nur-al-Absar*, Agra).

Madras

Members of the Board of Madras Presidency have forwarded to the Government an account of the trade of that region for the years 1855 and 1856. The report indicates that there has been an increase of Rs. 11223600 in the annual trade. There has been an increase in exports also: goods worth Rs. 1434616 more than previous year were exported through this city...

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 29 December 1856; copied from *Nur-al-Absar*, Agra).

The following news from *Nur-al-Absar* was quoted in *Meerut Gazette*, Vol. I, No. 27, dated 23 August 1865:

The Development of Agriculture

The *Nur-al-Absar*, Agra, No. 16, dated 15 August writes that a meeting of the British Indian Association, a body comprising certain influential and wealthy Bengali gentlemen, was held on 16 July. The common people of the Bengal Presidency should be grateful to these courageous gentlemen. They represent to the Government in a polite way about matters relating to the welfare of the people of India. In fact, the government itself consults them in certain matters. In the affair relating to the suspesion of income tax, for example, their opinion had a great influence on the government. There has been a proposal in Bengal that agriculture should be taught as a subject to students. The Director Bahadur of Bengal sought the opinion of this Association. They wrote in reply that at present it would not be proper to establish a separate institution for the teaching of agriculture. On the other hand, if agriculture could be made a part of the syllabus in the existing institution, the results would be useful. It would still be better if teachers could be appointed in native schools to teach agriculture.

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Mufid-e-Khalaiq, Agra:

Malik Ram has made the following statement in his book *Talamaza-e-Ghalib* about the scholarly activities of Munshi Shiv Narayan Aram:

> Another aspect of his scholarly activities was that he established a printing house known as *Matba'-e-Mufid-e-Khalaiq* Two of Ghalib's books, *Dastamboo* (Persian) and *Diwan-e-Urdu*, were printed at this press. Two news papers were also published from here. One of these was a fortnightly *guldasta, Me'yar-al-Sho'ra* and the other the monthly *Mufid-e-Khalaiq.* The editor of both of them was Aram himself. It appears that later a Hindi supplement of *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* was also published. Ghalib occasionally used to send his poetry to be published in the *guldasta.* A monthly paper known as *Baghawat-e-Hind* also began to be published from the same press in 1858. The editor of this paper was Dr. Mukund Lal, a friend of Munshi Shiv Narayan. It used to publish a serialized account of the events of 1857.

In the above statement Malik Ram makes no reference to the year of the first issue of *Mufid-e-Khalaiq.* He has also erred in saying that the newspaper was a monthly. In fact it was a weekly newspaper.

Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mehr has also written about Munshi Shiv Narayan Aram in his book *Khutoot-e-Ghalib*:

> He had started a press known as Mufid-e-Khalaiq Press at Agra. It was here that Ghalib's *Dastamboo* was first printed. In fact, *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* was the name of a newspaper of which, according to Garcin de Tassy, Munshi Shiv Narayan was the editor. He also published certain other newspapers —*Aftab-e-Alamtab, Me'yar-al-Sho'ra, Baghawat-e-Hind,* etc.

There seems to be a misunderstanding in the above statement. The *Aftab-e-Alamtab* was not published from the Matba'-e-*Mufid-e-Khalaiq* but from Matba'-e-*Aftab-e-Alamtab.* This can be stated on the authority of Garcin de Tassy also: "Aftab-e-Alamtab is an Urdu newspaper. Its articles are also published in Hindi script under the title of *Surya Prakash.* A Hindu by the name of Ganesh Lal is its editor." Ghalib, too,

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has referred to *Aftab-e-Alamtab* in a number of his letters—to Mirza Hargopal Tafta, Hatim Ali Mehr and Munshi Shiv Narayan:

> Mirza Tafta—listen!
>
> Recently my benefactor Hakim Ahsanullah Khan has become a subscriber of *Aftab-e-Alamtab*. I wrote to Maulana Mehr according to what he (Hakim Sahib) had asked me to write...Now you tell him that he is a subscriber from September 1858. Today is 16th of September. Let him send two issues of the newspaper to Hakim Sahib at his address —the Koocha of Khan Chand. He should continue to send the newspaper week by week in future and enter the name of Hakim Sahib among the subscribers. Another thing (which I want you to do) is this: In the said newspaper they publish a weekly account of the Emperor of Delhi in a page or a page and a half. Now I want a copy of all this matter since the day it began in the newspaper—only the account of the Emperor. I will send from here the amount of the cost of the paper and the charges of the copying to be paid to the calligrapher...

This is what he wrote to Mirza Hatim Ali Mehr:

> Dear Brother—Get the name of Hakim Ahsanullah Khan entered in the list of subscribers, and see to it that the newspaper is sent every week to him regularly. Well, what was so difficult about this that you omitted to do it? Even if it was difficult, what was the difficulty in informing me about it? I was not complaining; I just wonder if what I have just written is something to complain about! I have written all this in a letter to Mirza Tafta Did he not show it to you?

Still Ghalib did not get a reply either from him or Mirza Tafta. So he wrote again, this time in considerable details:

> Sahib—a newspaper known as *Aftab-e-Alamtab* is issued from there. Its editor has so arranged it that he writes a page or a page and a half every week about the Emperor of Delhi. I have no knowledge in which month (the serial) began. Hakim Ahsanullah Khan wants that a copy be made of these articles from the manuscript in the printing house,

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and this copy may be sent to him. (He also wants) that his name be entered in the list of subscribers from the beginning of 1858. The two issues (of the current month) may be sent to him in an envelope, and thereafter weekly issues may regularly be sent to him. I have already written to Mirza Hatim Ali Mehr but the request does not seem to have been complied with...Your cooperation is necessary in the matter. The printing house of *Aftab-e-Alamtab* is located in Kashmiri Bazar. I would like to know where the *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* Press is situated.

It can now be stated with conviction—in the light of the above statements—that Munshi Shiv Narayan was not the owner of the *Aftab-e-Alamtab*, nor was he its editor. The Matba'-e-*Aftab-e-Alamtab* was located in Kashmiri Gate. The editor of this newspaper was one Ganesh Lal. It was a weekly, and it published an account of the events of 1857 in a serialised manner.

The above may be regarded as a digression but it was thought to be necessary in order to remove the misunderstanding about *Aftab-e-Alamtab* and *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* being issued from the same press. To return to *Mufid-e-Khalaiq*. The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* writes:

Mufid-e-Khalaiq: weekly; 4 sheets; published every Tuesday; annual subscription Rs. 9, proprietor: Munshi Shiv Narayan...

A reference to *Sehr-e-Samari* (Lucknow) reveals that *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* was in existence in 1856 since the issue dated 5 January 1857 contains a news quoted from *Mufid-e-Khalaiq*:

Persia

An army consisting of a hundred thousand men is ready to challenge the British power. It is fully equipped with all kinds of arms and ammunition. It is hoped that this army would reach Oos from Tabriz by the time the fighting starts. Let us see what turn the situation takes.

There are a number of news items quoted from *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* in the *Sehr-e-Samari* dated 18 May 1857. It appears that this newspaper continued publication even during the riots and fighting of 1857, and was in existence long after 1857.

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6

Newspapers from Mirzapur, Benaras, Meerut, Bareilly, Indore, Jawarah and Rampur

Khair Khwah-e-Hind, Mirzapur

This is the first periodical in the Urdu language. Issued in 1837 from Mirzapur, it was edited by Rev. R.C. Matter. For a year in the beginning it was printed at the Baptist Mission in Calcutta. However, with the establishment of its own printing press at Mirzapur, known as Orphan School Press, it came to be printed at Mirzapur itself. The author of *Akhtar Shahen-shahi* writes:

> *Khair Khwah-e-Hind*: Mirzapur; monthly; on an average, six sheets; annual Rs. 3... printed at Orphan School Press; issued 1 August 1846.

The claim that the periodical was first issued in 1846 is not correct. *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* was an organ of American Church Society, and its aims were to propagate Christianity, to disseminate knowledge and to educate minds of the common people in India. It was a periodical of broad outlook but committed to Protestantism. Rev. R.C. Matter was a distinguished member of the Missionary Society of London, and was in full sympathy with the aims of the periodical of which he was the

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editor. This organ of Presbyterianism was a blessing for the development of the Urdu language. It would not be relevant to ask what benefit the cause of the propagation of Christianity derived from this periodical; what is more relevant is the fact that it led to the establishment of an Urdu press, and that it widened the scope, and explored the possibilities of the development, of the Urdu language at the time when the stranglehold of conventional poetry and fiction was the strongest on the language.

The style of writing encouraged by *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* has a distinguished place in the history of contemporary journalism. It discouraged the traditional style of writing which was characterised by excessive obscurity, floweriness and formality, and led to the development of a simple, pure and easily comprehensible kind of writing. In a way it was obliged to do so owing to the aim that had inspired it—to propagate religion. In order to be successful this propaganda had to be couched in an effective and simple language. The other important aim of this periodical was to encourage the spread of modern knowledge. The series of articles on modern sciences was intended to broaden the intellectual horizons of the readers, to encourage a logical, rational outlook and to lessen religious bigotry and narrow-mindedness. There is little doubt that the publication of *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* added a good deal to the storehouse of knowledge in the Urdu language. One complete file (1849-50) of the periodical is preserved in the India Office Library in London though not a single copy is extant in India.

The periodical office and press were destroyed during the mutiny of 1857. With the restoration of normalcy, however, both were started again. The selected articles of the earlier phase of the periodical were compiled in a book form and published under the titles *Muntakhib-al-Uloom* and *Mufarreh-al-Qaloob*. A copy each of both these books is preserved in the private collection of Maulana Imdad Sabri. The titles of the contents of the two books give ample indication of its variety and usefulness. It is to the credit of Rev. Matter that at a time when the Indian people were disinclined towards modern knowledge, he did so much to encourage it. The persuasive style of *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* weaned the reader away from the

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conventional poetry of the Rose and the Nightingale towards a more utilitarian and workaday prose. In the *Tarikh-e-Sahafat-e-Urdu* by Maulana Imdad Sabri we find the following titles quoted from the book in which articles from *Khair Khawh-e-Hind* were collected:

> Accounts of steam engines; Steam ships; Railways in England; Diving machines; English type and litho printing machines; and, the Ancient inhabitants of Britain.

Garcin de Tassy has again and again referred to *Khair Khwah-e-Hind*, and his references are to both the phases of the periodical. Here is a reference to the earlier phase: "*Khair Khwah-e-Hind* is published from Mirzapur. It is the organ of the American Protestant missionaries, and its aim is to propagate religion."[1] A later reference to *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* reads:

> A number of Indian journals that I have earlier described disappeared at the outbreak of the rebellion in 1857. The *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* which was being published from Mirzapur and had been in circulation since 1838 has also closed down. It was printed in both Persian and Roman scripts. It was edited by Rev. R.C. Matter under the auspices of London Missionary Society. Though it was the organ of American Missionary Society, as I pointed out in 1853, it published articles embracing a wider outlook. Its aim was not so much the propagation of religion as the dissemination of knowledge among the natives.[2]

In his *Tarikh-e-Sahafat-e-Urdu* Maulana Imdad Sabri has printed an extract from an article in *Khair Khwah-e-Hind* entitled "An Account of Litho Printing." The brief extract throws ample light not only on the style but also on the desire for spreading knowledge that had inspired this periodical during the twenty years of its existence in the first phase:

> This kind of printing (lithography) was invented by chance. Its inventor was the son of a singer. At first he was a student of divinity and law but began to learn his father's profession after the latter's death. He turned to author-

1. *Khutabat*, p. 34. Lecture dated 29 November 1853.
2. *Lectures* (Urdu), p. 252. Lecture dated 5 May 1859.

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ship when he realized he would not be able to make his mark in that field. Owing to poverty he found it difficult to print his books by using molten type that was then common. So he began to think of other means of printing books. He began to write on a copper plate after smoothing it, and he used a special kind of ink. Since copper was very expensive he tried using stone. By chance he discovered a kind of stone that could absorb ink. He smoothed and polished it. One day his mother asked him to write down the laundry account somewhere. Since paper was not then available, he thought of writing it on that stone with his special kind of ink hoping he would soon transfer it to a paper. Later, when he was going to rub it off, he asked himself if copies could be made of it. He was quite successful and could easily make copies of it. He began by printing certain musical scores which were published in 1796. Then he published maps and books.

However, there was one great hurdle in the way of complete success. The original copy had to be written in reverse. This was difficult. The attempt to solve this difficulty led to the invention of a waxen paper on which the original script was written. Having won success in this kind of printing he got a patent for it from the Emperor of Bavaria. He then started lithographic presses in London, Paris and Vienna... In 1800 he went to Vienna to apply this kind of device to the printing of textiles. He was not successful himself owing to certain adverse circumstances...

The art of lithographic printing of books had by now become very popular in his own homeland as well as abroad. In October 1809 he was appointed the superintendent of the royal printing house in Munich. He was asked to prepare a big map of Bavaria. In 1821 he came to London to display his art before printers; in that country the art of lithographic printing had already been introduced in 1817. This art became popular in 1810. It also spread to Russia and other parts of Europe. It came to India too a few years ago. The Company government has a big printing press of this kind in Calcutta where pictures and maps are printed through the lithographic process. Besides Calcutta, there

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are lithographic presses at Mirzapur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Agra, Ludhiana, Delhi, etc. There must be a number of them in the Bombay Presidency.

In 1861 there began the second phase of the existence of *Khair Khwah-e-Hind.* Garcin de Tassy has made many references to it, but this is beyond the scope of our present study.

BENARAS NEWSPAPERS

Akhbar Sudhakar, Benaras

Pandit Rataneshwar Tiwari started the first newspaper from Benaras. Though it was published in the Devnagri script, the language used was Urdu. The editorials, however, were written in Sanskritised Hindi. It is not known when it was first issued though it was first entered in the Register of Newspapers on 17 April 1847. It can be said that it must have been started much earlier than that. It is not mentioned in the official report for 1848.

It was a weekly, and priced at Re. 1 monthly. The monthly income was Rs. 74 and expenditure Rs. 50. The total number of subscribers was 74 out of which 50 were Hindus and 22 Europeans. There were only 2 Muslim subscribers.

Though *Sudhakar* was a good newspaper according to the official report, it did not have a large circulation. Benaras perhaps did not provide a wide circle of informed and educated readers. The number of subscribers declined to only 50 in 1849. A change in editorial policy became inevitable. An Urdu column was now added to the newspaper. This change too did not prove to be of much avail, and the circulation further declined to 40.

Towards the close of 1851 the ownership of the press and the newspaper was in the hands of Brindaban Tiwari, It is difficult to say if he was a relative of Ratneshwar Tiwari. He might have purchased the newspaper from its former owner. The official report does not throw any light on the subject. The change of ownership, if that it was, did not entail any change of policy. It remained as loyal to the Company government as it had been from the beginning. The language policy, however, could not be continued. The official report says:

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> It is now published only in Hindi. Its general tenour and style are better than that of *Benaras Akhbar*. Its language, however, is difficult and highly Sanskritised. Its circulation is confined only to those people who can understand this kind of Hindi.

Garcin de Tassy writes:

> The Hindi newspaper, *Sudhakar*, of Benaras is a staunch supporter of the government. Earlier, it was issued in both Hindi and Urdu; now it is published in Hindi alone. Its Hindi is difficult and highly Sanskritised. Its circulation is confined to educated Hindus.

Sudhakar became a fornightly in 1852 and its circulation went up to 100. Half of these copies were purchased by the government for distribution in rural schools. Owing to the attention of the Director of Education, the newspaper became more useful; instead of publishing news only, it became an organ for the dissemination of knowledge. The official report for 1853 makes a special mention of its matter, arrangement and usefulness:

> The *Sudhakar*, published from this printing house, is of a high standard among the native newspapers. It can be regarded as an effective educational instrument and a disseminator of useful information. Its articles satisfy the requirements of the times and they also help in the spread of education. Some of the essays published in it last year are: co-operation, common errors, the influence of the moon on animals and plants, and a translation of Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[1]

The complaint about the language is still there, notwithstanding the many kinds of excellence for which the newspaper is praised: "The language... is pure Hindi, close to Sanskrit. This kind of language is perhaps better appreciated at Benaras and the neighbouring areas than in any other part of the province."

1. Cited in *Subah-e-Shumal wa Maghrabi Ke Akhabarat wa Matbu'at*, p. 83.

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Benaras Gazette, Benaras

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* (p. 64) writes:

> *Benaras Gazette*: published from Muhalla Doodh Vinayak, thana Kal Bairav; weekly, on an average, 4 sheets; every Monday; subscription, annual Rs. 12; proprietor: Govind Raghunath Thathe; printed at *Matba'-e-Benaras Akhbar*; first issued: 1854.

The official report for 1848, however, says:

> Babu Raghunath Thathe publishes every week the *Benaras Akhbar* (Hindi) and *Benaras Gazette* (Urdu) from Matba'-e-*Benaras Akhbar*. *Benaras Akhbar* too is virtually an Urdu newspaper though the script is Nagri. It is lithographically printed. It generally publishes the translations of dharma shastra and similar Sanskrit books. There is hardly anything else in it except local news but these are generally copied from other newspapers. The price is Re. 1 monthly.
>
> The Urdu *Benaras Gazette* too is lithographically printed. Its printing is so bad that it is often scarcely legible. The subscription rate is Re. 1 monthly. The total monthly receipts are Rs. 26. The total expenses of both the newspapers are as follows:

	Rs.	A.	P.
Establishment	45	0	0
Paper	12	0	0
Ink	3	0	0
Paid for Newspapers	7	8	0
Postage	10	0	0
Rent	2	0	0
Contingencies	20	0	0
TOTAL	99	8	0

> The above would suggest a monthly loss of Rs. 29-8-0 upon the two newspapers. The charges from advertisements, however, made up the loss to a large extent.

The claim by the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* that the *Benaras Gazette* was first issued in 1854 is not correct since the details given above are based on the official report for 1848.

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Incidentally, Siddiqui makes the astonishing statement that "the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* says that the year of the first issue of *Benaras Gazette* was 1845, which might be true".

The paper had 13 European subscribers in the beginning but the editorial policy of outright condemnation and denunciation of Christian missionaries scared most of them away. Its circulation declined to 17 in 1850.

A weak point was the newspaper's excessive championing of, and eulogies for, the Nepalese monarch. It attacked the adversaries of Nepal with a remarkable vehemence and agressiveness. Moreover, obscenity and personal attacks, too, kept many readers away. The circulation declined to 8 in 1851.

The editor was sued in a court of law for libel. He had to submit a written apology. The newspaper closed down in 1853, and thus the gradual process of decline was complete.

Mirat-al-Uloom, Benaras

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* writes:

> *Mirat-al-Uloom*: Benaras; Muhalla Bengali Tola;.... a periodical of informative articles; monthly; 20 small size sheets; Rs. 2 annually; Proprietor: Babu Bhairav Prasad; Editor: Vir Singh: first issued: August 1849.

On the contrary, the official report for 1849 says:

> Babu Kidar Nath Ghosh and Kali Prasad started a printing house in Benaras known as Matba'-e-*Bagh-o-Bahar* towards the close of 1848. They issued the first number (of *Mirat-al-Uloom*) in August this year. It was a monthly periodical which had to close down after the third issue owing to financial loss. The subscription rate was Rs. 6. It was edited by Harbans Lal. He wanted to publish articles on modern history and the European methods of agriculture. However, the receipts were lower than expenses, and so the periodical had to close down.

Bagh-o-Bahar, Benaras

Babu Kedar Nath Ghosh and Babu Kali Prasad, the proprietors of *Mirat-al-Uloom*, also started the publication of two newspapers: *Bagh-o-Bahar* in Urdu and *Chandra Udai* in Bengali.

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Both these newspapers were weeklies and began publication in 1848. The Bengali newspaper probably met with the same fate as the Urdu monthly *Mirat-al-Uloom* since it finds no mention in the official report for 1849. *Bagh-o-Bahar*, however, continued. It had 40 subscribers. The monthly subscription was fourteen annas. Owing to the fact that it published news only and did not contain articles of general interest its circulation declined. In 1849 there were 34 subscribers only.

The two partners could not pull along easily for too long. Babu Kedar Nath withdraw from partnership in 1851. Its sole editor now, Babu Kali Prasad, brought about a change; a part of the newspaper was reserved for judgments of the *sadr* civil-court of North-Western province. The monthly subscription now was Re. 1 and there were 16 subscribers. The official report for 1852 says:

> The proprietor of Matba'-e-*Bagh-o-Bahar* and the editor of *Bagh-o-Bahar* is Babu Kali Prasad Bannerji. The newspaper publishes nothing but news; the circulation too has declined. Occasionally these are useful essays too in the newspaper. Printing is very bad. Bad printing might be one reason for limited circulation.
>
> The occasional essays in the newspaper relate to medicine, astrology and history....

According to both Garcin de Tassy and the official report the press as well as the newspaper closed down in 1853.

Zaerin-e-Hind, Benaras

Though the short-lived *Mirat-al-Uloom* was a joint venture of Babu Kedar Nath Ghosh and Babu Kali Prasad Bannerji, its editor was Harbans Lal. After the closure of *Mirat-al-Uloom* Harbans Lal started his own printing house known as Matba'-Mafed-e-Hind and issued *Zaerin-e-Hind*. The author of *Akhtar-Shahenshahi* has noted the fact. The official report for 1850 also mentions it: "Harbans Lal has been issuing *Zaerin-e-Hind* from Matba'-e-Mafad-e-Hind for the last six months. It has a circulation of 75". The claim by the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* that *Zaerin-e-Hind* was first issued in 1853 is not correct. The other details in *Akhtar Shahenshahi* seem to be correct:

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Benaras: muhallah Pandey Ki Haveli, Bhelupura; proprietor Lala Harbans Lal; editor Bhairon Prasad.

Garcin de Tassy writes:

> *Zaerin-e-Hind* is published twice a month on 8 small-size sheets. The pages are divided into columns. Articles too are published in it besides ordinary news which are given in considerable detail.
>
> (*Lectures*, p. 33)

The official report for 1851 says:

> The Matba'-e-*Zaerin-e-Hind* is still in the hands of Harbans Lal and Bhairon Prasad. The Urdu newspaper *Zaerin-e-Hind* is published from here. A look at the list of subscribers would reveal that the newspaper depends solely on its European subscribers. More than half of its Hindu subscribers have withdrawn support this year:

1850		
	Hindu	42
	Mussalman	9
	European	24
	Total	75
1851		
	Hindu	16
	Mussalman	5
	European	35
	Total	56

The proprietors, Harbans Lal and Bhairon Prasad lost courage in 1853. The newspaper as well as the printing house both were closed down.

Benaras Harkara

Another weekly newspaper called *Benaras Harkara* was issued from Benaras in August 1851. It was published from Record Press under the management of Ross. The subscription was Re. 1. There were 25 subscribers. Among them there were 16 Hindu, 3 Muslim and 6 Christian subscribers.

Articles of general interest, apart from news, were published in it. The selection of articles from other newspapers was

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excellent. The government record for 1852 indicates that its editor was Saiyyid Ahmad Ali. The newspaper was in existence till 1853 as the official report for that year mentions its name.

Aftab-e-Hind, Benaras

On the 1st January 1852 an Urdu weekly was issued from Benaras. It was edited by Babu Kashi Das and printed at Kashi Press. The annual subscription was Rs. 5-8as and the monthly 8 as. It was printed on $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$ size paper and consisted of eight sheets. It was issued every Thursday. The reference in *Akhtar Shahenshahi* is as follows:

> *Aftab-e-Hind*, Benaras, printed at Kashi Press under the supervision of Babu Govind Chandra at the house of Babu Kali Nath alias Raja Babu; fortnightly; annual subscription: Rs. 6; 12 sheets; first issued: 1854.
>
> (*Akhtar Shahenshahi*, pp. 33-34)

The claim above that the newspaper was first issued in 1854 is not correct since a file of 1852-53 issues is preserved in Delhi University Library.[1] An advertisement was issued on 1 January 1852. It is given below:

> Let it be known to men of Intelligence that a newspaper called *Aftab-e-Hind* is being printed and beautifully decorated at Kashi Press and being issued from the city of Benaras for the advantage of the common people and their welfare. It is in Urdu language and has started publication from the 1st of January 1852. The newspaper enclosed with the present advertisement would fully reveal the situation. The life and stability of this newspaper depends on the good-will and inclination of admirers and readers. It is hoped that the Promoters of Art and the kindly Rich would attentively give Eternal Life to this new Bud in the Garden. They would send us their Acceptance so that it might be despatched to them every week.
>
> Printed at Kashi Press in the City of Benaras under the supervision of Babu Kashi Das.
> 1 January 1852.

1. *Urdu Adab* (1957). Eighteen issues (6 January 1852 to 5 May 1853) are preserved.

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The name of the newspaper was printed in bold letters in both Urdu and English on the upper portion of the title-page. The lower half was reserved for advertisements. An advertisement of the newspaper was printed in the very first issue:

> (This newspaper) is printed at Kashi Press (located) at the house of Babu Kale Nath alias Raja Babu in Muballa Kedarghat in the City of Benares. Those interested in subscribing to it may inform the editor of the newspaper. It will immediately be sent to them. Anyone interested in getting some news or opinion printed in it, may kindly send it to the editor in writing. It will be printed free of charge. The printing of advertisements, however, will be charged at the rate of one anna per line. Any one desiring to get a book or a map printed in Bengali, Persian, Nagri or English may send it to the editor of the newspaper. It will be printed on more economical terms than in other printing houses.[1]

Poverty and general economic backwardness were rampant in Indian society in early nineteenth century. Newspapers were the chief victims of economic depression. People did not have enough money to subscribe to them. This can be stated of all the newspapers without exception. Limited circulation, lack of balance in income and expenditure, complaint about the readers' indifference—these are common everywhere. Such a complaint was made by *Aftab-e-Hind* also; we have the following in the second column of the title-page:[2]

> It was expected of readers that, after reading the advertisement sent with the first issue, they would send subscription for at least six months. That bud of hope was, however, destroyed. A whole year has passed. Printing expenses have to be paid out of the subscription money. It is therefore requested that the buyers who have not so far paid their subscription may kindly do so for the previous year so that arrangement could be made for the current year.

Aftab-e-Hind was a better newspaper than others published

1. *Urdu Adab* (March 1857), pp. 63-64.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

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from Benaras. The circulation therefore was quite large. The official report for 1852 says:

> The style of writing in *Aftab-e-Hind* is good. News are translated from English newspapers. This newspaper is quite influential, and is appreciated in native circles.

Babu Kashi Das resigned from editorship in May 1853. Babu Govind Raghu Nath Shivali became the new editor. This change, however, did not entail any change in the style of presentation, arrangement and contents in the newspaper. The circulation declined a little.

Subscribers	*1852*	*1853*
Hindus	68	44
Muslims	20	13
Europeans	17	10
Exchange	5	4
Total	110	71

Garcin de Tassy has mentioned the newspaper in his *Lectures*. He writes:

> The editor of *Aftab-e-Hind* is Babu Govind Raghu Nath, the author of *A History of the Sikhs* (in Urdu) and other valuable books. This newspaper is known for its peculiar style and excellent literary articles.

The official report for 1853 makes a special mention of the utility and the breadth of scope of the essays published in *Aftab-e-Hind*:

> (*Aftab-e-Hind*) publishes news and extracts from the *Government Gazette* besides articles on Indian History, medicine, chemistry, and astronomy. It publishes news from different parts of the world such as Rangoon, Constantinople, China, Nepal, and almost all the major Indian Cities.

In the first issue of the second volume, Babu Kashi Das describes the various services rendered by his newspaper. He also complains about the indifference of the readers. All this confirms the opinion expressed in the official report:

> Thanked be all-sufficing Providence that *Aftab-e-Hind* is now a year old. The admiration and attention of its

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admirers has brought it up. Its body is no doubt frail owing to lack of nourishment but it is not lacking in wishing well to its readers. It is a young child but perfect in art and knowledge. It is not noisy but sweet-tongued in the presence of its elders. A year has passed but it has not played truant so far.

The leaders of the newspaper are not unaware what counsels it gave to the administrators regarding the welfare of the common people, what efforts it made to remove hatred and to bring about accord... what advantages of chemistry and industry and agriculture it revealed to the people, what accounts it gave of the movement of the planets and the earth.... Inspite of its low price, it never shirked from hard labour. But, alas, the readers of the paper did not satisfy us even through mere words, what to speak of actions. The attention of the reader would have taken it to great heights of perfection in content and form....

Notwithstanding (this → lack of encouragement) the intention is to publish articles on Indian history and thereby charm the reader.... Thus our submission to the readers and admirers is that they do not withold from us their attention....[1]

Asbab-e-Bhagawat-e-Hind (Causes of the Indian Rebellion) by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a great work that brought to light the author's forthrightness and his unusual powers of expression. However, the causes of the rebellion of 1857 which he has so ably analysed in this book had already been discussed by journalists and newspapermen in their articles. The causes were not a product of contingent circumstances alone but had long been inherent in the system. The ignorance of local languages on the part of the British officers, their lack of understanding of the psychology of the common people in India and indifference to the plight of the subjects were amply discussed in contemporary newspapers long before the actual outbreak of the rebellion. The following extract from *Aftab-e-Hind* (10 January 1853) would be of interest in this regard:

1. Quoted in *Urdu Adab* (March 1857), p. 64.

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It is a matter of great satisfaction that what we wrote in *Aftab-e-Hind* about the examination of civil officers has now been proved true. The newspaper *Prabhakar* has revealed that the (administrative officers) cannot speak even a word or two of Bengali or Urdu.... What a pity that these gentlemen do not know the language of the people but become officers and adjudicate civil cases. The government has entrusted them with the life, property and honour of the people. Occupying the chair of office they do not pay heed to others' position nor do they bother about rules and regulations....The government should institute a (competitive) examination and should appoint officers only after they have successfully passed it.

Another factor causing great disaffection among the common people was the general haughtiness and airs of superiority assumed by Englishmen. Besides, though in theory the rule of law prevailed in the country, in practice there was a good deal of discrimination between the rulers and the ruled. What is more important is the fact that justice was not only done but did not also appear to be done. The *Aftab-e-Hind* underlined one such occasion when an Englishman shot dead an Indian when the latter refused him permission to trespass through his private land. In the court of law, the Englishman made the plea that he did not fire at the Indian in order to kill him but in sheer self-defence. The jury accepted his plea and gave him the lenient punishment of one year's simple imprisonment. The judge publicly expressed sympathy with the accused and asked him to spend a year's imprisonment in reading and study. The *Aftab-e-Hind* sarcastically commented:

> This indeed is justice ! The subject loses his life, the plaintiff does not get justice. The scales of justice were upset by the wind of partiality. Had an Indian committed the same crime, he would have received due punishment. The equality before law is now apparent to everyman !

On another occasion the newspaper commented with a greater forthrightness after giving brief details of the case:

> The *Riyaz-e-Noor* of Multan tells us that (two British officers) were dismissed from their posts when they were

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convicted by a court of law. They were, however, offered alternative posts: one was made a post master and the other a session judge. True, if an Indian had been convicted of a similar crime, he would not have got another position throughout the British dominions. This is a clear case of partiality due to nationalist feeling.[1]

Sir Syed regarded the imposition of stamp duty and taxes as one of the main causes of the rebellion. He has written: "The Indian people who are getting poor day by day are certainly unable to bear this burden. All right thinking people have disliked this duty. They have said that taxing documents is as bad as imposing a tax on judicial paper. This, apart from being financially burdensome, hinders people in many cases from going to a court of law."[2] The *Aftab-e-Hind* too makes perceptive comments on the subject, and advises the government not to indulge in such practices. The following editorial was written when the government had imposed a kind of pilgrim tax on the Hindus:

> People have been coming to Allahabad on the occasion of *mela Sankrant Makar* since times immemorial. It is said that this *mela* or fare started at the time when Ganga ji, Jamuna ji and an invisible river that flows underground came together. Before the confluence of these three rivers took place, there used to be an idol, known as Beni Madhavji, under a bunyan tree there. This tree, it is written in religious scriptures, existed at the time of the birth of Adam and shall exist for ever. Let it be known that people have been coming to that place since the confluence of the three rivers first took place. There used to live a *brahmchari* with the name of Mukund at that place. Emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar built a fort there after the death of that *brahmchari*. The Emperor imposed a tax on the pilgrims who performed *mundan* there. Ritual bathing in the river, however, was not taxed. The *mundan* tax continued during the days of the company government. Later, however, the tax was withdrawn. The *mela* continued to be held

1. *Urdu Adab* (March 1957), pp. 66-67.
2. *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind*, p. 55.

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there; the government made excellent arrangements. This year, however, a change has come about: the pilgrims are now required to pay a tax. The shop-keepers too have to pay a toll-tax according to the area of the land occupied by them. A *halwai* had to pay Rs. 264 as tax. If such a situation continues, how will it be possible for poor people to perform ritual bathing there. At present only land is taxed; one wonders if the government would next impose a tax on the wearing of *dhotis* or upper garments!

During the days of (Mughal) monarchy many taxes were indeed common, but nobody had then heard of stamp duty and such other taxes. The Government is issuing orders these days which may be construed as a form of tyranny. Where will the poor subjects get money from to be able to pay such taxes?

It would be proper for the Government to impose taxes such as the *mundan* tax only and to withdraw others. The subjects would then be happy and pray for the Government.[1]

During the days of the Company government the missionaries were openly engaged in the work of propagating Christianity. The officials of the Company government did everything possible to encourage them. The Government itself indirectly attempted to put native religions, particularly Hinduism, in had light in the name of social reform through legislation. Whatever the motive might have been, the fact was that a number of laws were passed that intended to discourage native religious practices. The brief comment in the *Aftab-e-Hind* throws light on the little known facts of social and religious history in the nineteenth century:

> Janab Dr. Mount Bahadur has proposed that the religious practice of "Hari bol" be totally abolished. Two doctors may be posted out at the bank of the river Ganges to see to it that nobody practices "Hari bol".
>
> The custom is common in Bengal. The dying (and not the dead) are taken to the bank of the river Ganges. Holy

1. Quoted in *Urdu Adab* (March 1957), p. 67.

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water is sprinkled on his or her face and the words "Hari bol" are chanted.[1]

A number of momentous sociological changes were taking place in India during the nineteenth century. A study of contemporary newspapers is a better guide to the day to day effects of these changes than the pages of social historians.

Two important social changes that took place with the advent of British power in India related to the increase in the number of the employed and the consequent diversification of professions. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan noted the former and commented: "Apart from government servants there used to be in the old days servants belonging to the *amirs*, *sardars* and *subedars*, too. Their number was not less than that of the former. Such a situation does not prevail now, causing thus a good deal of unemplyment. The result was that when the rebels wanted to employ peope, thousands responded. People came in search of employment just as the hungry rush towards food during a famine."[2] Keeping this analysis in mind let us now turn to a letter to the editor in the *Aftab-e-Hind* (24 April 1853) with special attention to the sharp note of irony towards the close:

The Editor,
Aftab-e-Hind,

After due greetings, let it be manifest that the present lowly age is undergoing a great change that the tongue of the pen is unable to describe. As long as penmanship (education) was confined to the families of the Gentle, everyone was happy, but since the days men of all castes have taken to penmanship and have adopted the course of the pursuit of knowledge, giving up their own professions, everyone has become unhappy. Evil days have come. Knowledge has lost its value (owing to this change). These people have started accepting jobs for low pittance that would in the past have brought big emoluments. For them this low allowance is more than enough. Things have now come to such a pass that there are many more seekers than there are jobs. Employment is scarce, Everyone is starving.

1. Quoted in *Urdu Adab* (March 1957), p. 66.
2. *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (Urdu), p. 59.

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The result is that the gentle have started adopting the professions of the lowly and the mean just to be able to make both ends meet. Thus, these days a rich *mahajan* (a member of the merchant caste) is bent upon depriving the *Kalwars* (members of the low wine-brewing caste) of their profession and has paid more in order to obtain a contract for liquor-brewing. Some people say that the said Rai Sahib would incur a loss in this business. They are entirely wrong. By entering into this business. the Rai Sahib has saved the Faith of thousands of men. Previously, they had to drink liquor out of the hands of the *Kalwars*; many people objected to it. These objections are now removed. In our opinion the Rai Sahib has done something excellent; he has saved the Faith of many. The government too has benefited as it has received more money than in the previous years. Congratulations.

A well-wisher of the Faith.[1]

Among Benaras newspapers, the *Aftab-e-Hind* had the longest life. The reason might have had something to do with its popularity "among the native circles." News from the *Aftab-e-Hind* were quoted in *Tilism-e-Lucknow* right from its first issue (25 July 1856) to that dated 6 February 1857. It is difficult to say what role the *Aftab-e-Hind* played during the eventful days of the Rebellion.

MEERUT NEWSPAPERS

Jam-e-Jamshed, Meerut

Jam-e-Jamshed was the first newspaper to be issued from Meerut. It was a weekly, owned by Babu Shiv Chandra Nath, an able and intelligent journalist. It began life in 1847. In the official report for 1848 the name of the proprietor has been mentioned as also that of the editor. The same report tells us that *Jam-e-Jamshed* published only ordinary news and that in that year its circulation had reached the high figure of 103.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* too has mentioned the name of *Jam-e-Jamshed* and given the following details: "*Jam-*

1. Quoted in *Urdu Adab* (March 1957), pp. 71-72.

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e-Jamshed: Meerut; weekly; average 4 sheets; issued January 1857." The date of the first issue, however, is not correct.

The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* (dated, 28 January 1850) gives us the important information that Munshi Har Sukh Rai, proprietor and editor of *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore, had been the editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed*, Meerut, before he started his own journalistic venture at Lahore:

> *Koh-e-Nur* (Lahore) has started publication from the 14th of January under the editorship of Munshi Har Sukh who was earlier the editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed*, Meerut....

Babu Shiv Chandra Nath was a resourceful person. Inspite of the fact that Munshi Har Sukh Rai had left him, he started a printing house, called Matba'-e-*Jam-e-Jamshed*, at Agra in January 1850. The next year he started a newspaper also from Agra. This newspaper had the same name—*Jam-e-Jamshed*, Agra. We have the following news in *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Agra:

"Jam-e-Jamshed", Agra

> (This newspaper) will be published from Agra from January 1851 every Saturday under the editorship of Babu Shiv Chandra Nath. It will consist of eight pages. Advance annual subscription: Rs. 9.
>
> (*As'ad al-Akhbar*, 6 January 1851)

Soon after the issue of the Agra *Jam-e-Jamshed* the name of the Meerut newspaper was changed to *Jam-e-Jehan Numa*, and with this name it continued publication till the days of the rebellion in 1857. Garcin de Tassy too has mentioned *Jame-e-Jehan Numa*, Meerut, in his *Khutbat*. He writer:

> There are two Hindustani newspapers published from Meerut. The first is *Miftah-al-Akhbar* whose editor is Mehboob Ali. He published a concise Hindustani dictionary from Lucknow in 1847.
>
> The other newspaper is *Jam-e-Jehan Numa*. The title contains an allusion to the legendary cup of Jamshed in which he could see all that was taking place in the world. The newspaper publishes extracts from the Government Gazette and judgments of the North-Western province High Court besides ordinary news. It also publishes a sheet as a

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supplement containing Faizi's translation (in Persian) of Mahabharat. The supplement is supplied free of charge to the readers.

In another place while talking about the *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* of Calcutta, de Tassy has again mentioned the *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* of Meerut:

> *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* is an Urdu newspaper published from Calcutta. It contains nothing but personal or government announccments. A newspaper of the same title used to be issued from Meerut about which I talked in my lecture of 26 November 1853. The Meerut newspaper was more literary in its approach. The Calcutta *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* is printed in type while the Meerut newspaper was printed lithographically.

There is a letter to the editor in the *Koh-e-Nur* of Lahore which makes a special mention of the editor of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* of Meerut. It is about the cleaning operations in the ancient town of Kurukshetra, a place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. The writer of the letter makes an appeal for people's participation in the venture. He made a reference to the religious duty of the Hindus who ought to do something to renovate the places associated with their ancient glory. It was pointed out in the letter that the common people and government servants of the district had already come out with donations and offers of voluntary labour for the venture. The letter continues:

> It was decided that the people should be informed about this work through advertisements in newspapers. The Majlis-e-Dharam Sabha which meets every fortnightly in this district at the house of Pandit Kedar Nath Sahib got an advertisement composed. It was hoped that the proprietor of Matba'-e-*Koh-e-Nur* (that is, you) and that of Matba'-e-*Jam-e-Jamshed*—since both of them belong to the Hindu nation—would be requested to publish them in their respective newspapers.

The "nationality" of the editor of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* also became apparent when *Akhbar-al-Heqaiq* of Agra published, in a rather provocative manner, news about a cow slaughter near

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Hardwar. The *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* made a scathing attack on the Agra newspaper and its editor who were also restrained by the executive committee of Agra College, and the matter came to an end.

Thus, a factor in the popularity of the *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* must certainly have been its championing of the cause of Hindu sectarianism in its nascent stages. It closed down, like so many of its contemporaries, during the turmoil of 1857.

Miftah-al-Akhbar, Meerut

Another Urdu newspaper, known as *Miftah-al-Akhbar*, was issued from Meerut in 1949. It was published under the editorship of Mehboob Ali, and in the very first year of issue it achieved a circulation of 68. The official report for 1849 tells us:

> Hakim Mehboob Ali has been issuing a newspaper from Matba'-e-Qadri since May 1849. Its name is *Miftah-al-Akhbar* and has a circulation of 68. The subscription charge is Re. 1. The calligraphy and printing is of a good quality, and the overall quality is excellent. However, there is hardly anything in it except news.
>
> Inspite of the qualities mentioned above, the newspaper could not become popular. Gradually, the circulation declined. The report for 1850 comments as follows: "The circulation of the *Miftah-al-Akhbar* of Hakim Mehboob Ali has declined from 64 to only 40. According to the editor's statement the newspaper suffered a loss of Rs. 200 last year and the newspaper was about to cease publication". The newspaper, however, continued to be published though with reduced circulation; it was only 21, according to 1851 report. The loss of circulation could not be endured for long. The newspaper closed down in 1852. The government report (for 1852) tells us:
>
> There is nothing new about this newspaper to be written about. The editor prints extracts from *Shahnamah* and other historical works in order to fill up the fixed number of pages. Mehboob Ali writes that since he could not bear the expenses, he was obliged to close down the newspaper for a few days.

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The reference to *Miftah-al-Akhbar* in connection with *Jam-e-Jamshed* of Meerut in the *Lectures* of Garcin de Tassy has already been mentioned earlier. Another reference in the *Lectures* is given below:

> The newspapers that have closed down are as follows: *Zaerin-e-Hind*, Benaras: *Bagh-o-Bahar* (published from the same city); *Benaras Gazette*; *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* from Delhi; *Miftah-al-Akhbar* from Meerut; *Darya-e-Nur* from Lahore; *Simla Akhbar*; *Nur-un-ala-Nur* from Ludhiana; *Bagh-e-Nur* from Amritsar.

Umdat-al-Akhbar, Bareilly

In 1847 Bareilly too joined the list of cities from where newspapers were published. *Umdat-al-Akhbar* was issued by Mr. Tregear, the Superintendent of Bareilly College from its own printing press. In the beginning Maulvi Abdurrehman was the editor. However, since he could not continue as editor for long, he was replaced by Lachman Prasad.

Its circulation was not confined to the students and teachers of Bareilly College alone; respectable eitizens and people in the neighbouring areas too subscribed to it. The following is an extract from the government report for 1848:

> In the beginning the newspaper was issued under the supe-rvision of Maulvi Abdul Rehman; now the name of Lachman Prasad is printed as editor. The newspaper is printed at the Matba'-e-*Umdat-al-Akhbar* of Bareilly College. The subscri-ption charge is Re. 1 but Mr. Tregear writes that soon its price would be reduced since the initial investment has been largely recovered. The number of pages too is going to be increased from 4 to 6. A hundred copies are printed out of which 76 are distributed:

European subscribers in Bareilly			:	11
Hindu	,,	,,	:	12
Mussalman	,,	,,	:	8
European subscribers outside Bareilly			:	5
Hindu	,,	,, ,,	:	12
Mussalman	,,	,, ,,	:	11
Government Schools			:	8
In exchange			:	9

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The report points out that the expenses of the newspaper were Rs. 40 while the total receipts amounted to Rs. 70. The report further says:

> The general character of the newspaper is good. No other newspaper can be compared with it so far as the excellence of litho printing is concerned. However, it is not a first-rate newspaper in respect of utility, influence and arrangement of presentation. Lack of caution is evident in the selection of material. Sometimes the style is such as to make it unpopular among those natives who regard that prose as mean and deplorable which is close to everyday life. Police reports and local gossip should not find a place in a newspaper associated with a government-sponsored institution.

The report for 1849 says:

> The number of pages of *Umdat al-Akhbar* has recently been raised to six without an increase in the price. The paper is being issued in an excellent manner. In the greater part of each issue articles of general interest are published. The native gentlemen do not seem to be much interested in the paper since there are only 37 native subscribers. The circulation has declined from 76 last year to 65 this year. The receipts (Rs. 58) and expenditure (Rs. 40) are as follows:

Salaries	Rs. 15	monthly
Postal Expenses	Rs. 6	,,
Subscription to *Delhi Gazette* and postage	Rs. 4	,,
Paper	Rs. 15	,,
Total	Rs. 40	,,

The report for the next year indicates that the newspaper had further declined with the circulation going down to 56. It still further declined in the following year, to a mere 43 copies. The report for 1851 comments:

> The *Umdat-al-Akhbar* publishes news and extracts from Agra *Government Gazette*. It may be worthwhile that its language is not difficult Urdu, and that is why the native public does not like it. Though last year its price was further reduced by Rs. 2, yet the circulation declined from 56 to 43.

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Inspite of fluctuations in its circulation, the newspaper continued to be published. The report for 1854 informs us:

> The newspaper is quite useful within its limitations. Plenty of extracts are published from English newspapers and other learned sources. The paper is being run smoothly and systematically.

News quoted from *Umdat-al-Akhbar* can be found in a number of contemporary newspapers such as *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore, *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Agra and *Sahr-e-Samari*, Lucknow.

News from Bareilly

> The news is that oil lamps will be installed in the city at proper places. The lamps have been so made that they will consume less oil but give more light.

News about the Generosity of the Rani of Birbhum

> ... The Rani Sahiba has made a donation of Rs. 1 lakh to the Murshidabad College. Besides, she has also donated certain amounts to Colleges at Rangpur, Kamerkoli and Bahirbunder. She has thus taught a lesson in generosity and nobility to the big rajahs in the country.
>
> (*Koh-e-Nur*, 20 January 1855)

Malwa Akhbar, Indore

Indore too figured on the newspaper map of India in 1854 with the issue of *Malwa Akhbar*. It was actually started by Pandit Dharm Narayan Bhaskar, the young former editor of *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*, Delhi, under the patronage of Maharaja Holkar and N.C. Hamilton. It was a bilingual newspaper with Hindi in one column and Urdu in the other. The *Fawaid-al-Nazerin* of Master Ram Chander (dated 9 October 1848) makes a reference to it: "Pandit Dharam Narayan who had issued the *Qiran-al-Sa'dain* is now going to start *Malwa Akhbar* which will contain Urdu in one column and Hindi in the other". The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* too has made a reference to *Malwa Akhbar*: "*Malwa Akhbar*: Indore; weekly; 4 sheets large size; mixed with Nagri, issued from Matba' of the College, 1849". Garcin de Tassy has mentioned the *Malwa Akhbar* in the following words:

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Malwa Akhbar is from Indore, the capital of Malwa. It is an eight page weekly. It has Urdu in one column and Hindi in the other. The editor is Dharm Narayan, a young man of 26 or 27. He is a good poet and has translated Mill's *Political Economy* and *History of England*.

The official report for 1849, too, makes a mention of the *Malwa Akhbar*. Here too 1849 is referred to as the year of the first issue of the paper. The report adds to our information the fact that the newspaper contained only news and that towards the close of 1849 its circulation had reached the figure of 108. The original newspaper is not extant but news from it was reprinted in other contemporary newspapers:

Gwalior

Malwa Akhbar writes that on the 21st of the month the letter from the Maharajah was read out. Therein was written that the large seal of the Maharajah had the words "Fidwi Shah Alam Badshah". These words should now be changed to "Fidwi Shah Inglistan".

(Reprinted in *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, No. 130)

The report for 1853 gives us the following information:

Till now the editor of *Malwa Akhbar* was Dharm Narayan, the Head Master of the Indore School. However, the new editor of this newspaper now is Master Prem Narayan, Second Master in the same school. The language used in this paper is correct, pure and simple. It appears that the editor likes to write plain and easy language so that the readers might easily understand it. The news printed are generally about the neighbouring areas or about those native states that have been visited by the editor and about which he has first hand information.

Malwa Akhbar continued to be published even after 1857 and came to be regarded as among the best newspapers in the country. Pandit Pran Kishan and Munshi Ghulam Ali were now its editors. In the *Akhbar-e-Alam* (dated 12 October 1865) there is a news about the *Malwa Akhbar*:

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Malwa Akhbar

A friend of the editor of *Akhbar-e-Alam* writes from Indore (dated 29 September) that Pandit Pran Kishan Sahib, Head Master, Indore School and the editor of *Malwa Akhbar*, and Munshi Ghulam Ali Sahib, assistant editor, have resigned their posts. The editor of the *Akhbar-e-Alam* was sorry to learn it because the kind of news-writing that was there in *Malwa Akhbar* owing to the style of Pandit Pran Kishan is to be found nowhere else.

The *Aftab-e-Punjab*, dated 9 May 1878, published a regrettable news about the editor of the *Malwa Akhbar*. Though the news, incidentally, confirms the fact that *Malwa Akhbar* was in existence till 1878, its real import lies in another fact that it brings to light. It shows that the authorities in the Malwa State made a strict scrutiny of the contents of the newspaper. The editor did not enjoy freedom of expression. The *Malwa Akhbar* was a purely state-owned newspaper:

Punishment to the Editor of "Malwa Akhbar"

The editor of the *Malwa Akhbar* has been sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment by Maharaja Holker. The reason is that some of the writings in this newspaper were found to be against the provisions of the Publication Act.

(*Aftab-e-Punjab*, 9 May 1878)

Muhtashim-al-Akhbar, Jawarah

This newspaper was issued at the instance of Nawab Muhttishimuddaulah Ghaus Muhammad Khan of Jawarah. It was a state paper, edited by Munshi Mirza Nasrullah Beg. An advertisement regarding this paper appeared in the *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Agra (dated 27 May 1850):

Recently Nawab Muhttishimuddaulah Ghaus Muhammad Khan Bahadur of Jawarah has established a lithographic press and started a two-sheet newspaper known as *Muhtashim-al-Akhbar*. The language is pure, expressive Urdu. The editor is Mirza Nasrullah Beg and the subscription is Rs. 12 annually.

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The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* too has mentioned the *Muhtishim-al-Akhbar* but the year of the first issue is given as 1867 which certainly is not correct.

Muhtashim-al-Akhbar

Jawara; weekly; 4 sheets average; Thursday; Registered no 67; annual subscription: Rs. 10-8as.; Proprietor: Munshi Nasrullah Beg; editor; Liaqatullah; issued from Matba'-e-Jawara; 1867.

A number of news items borrowed from *Muhtashim-al-Akhbar* are found in the *Sehr-e-Samari* of Lucknow.

Shahjehanpur

We learn from the paper of news that a few men disguised as sufi-beggars arrived at the *sarai* (inn) of Shahjehanpur. They pretended to be travellers. They were allowed to stay at the inn. Full of guile, they posed as pious, holy men. The same night they broke into a house and disappeared with all the loot. The news of this theft spread like wildfire throughout the city. The victim of the theft complained to city police officer but to no avail. It is said that loot and theft are rampant there in every part of the city. It is necessary that the Company government bring about peace and normalcy so that people might breathe in peace.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 19 January 1857)

Jawarah

On the 15th of December the belongings of...Sahib Bahadur, Captain of the Turk Cavalry regiment, arrived at Jawarah in the custody of Tilangas from Mau Cantonment and was sent towards Nasirabad Cantonment on the 16th... Nawab Sahib Bahadur (of Jawarah) is busy looking after the state. He is all the time engaged in the welfare of the people. The subjects are happy with his justice. Peace reigns everywhere. Everyone can quench his thirst by drinking of the kindness of the Nawab.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 19 January 1857)

The Mazaq, Rampur:

The inclusion of the *Mazaq* (humour) here in the history of

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Urdu newspapers before 1857 is a rather unfortunate joke. Its actual date of issue was the year 1885 but many have taken it to be 1855 owing to a calligraphic error and given it the undeserved credit of being the first humorous newspaper in Urdu. The details of this unfortunate incident are as follows:

It was first mentioned by the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi*. The error committed by him has misled many researchers into believing that *Mazaq* was the first among the Punch newspapers of Urdu. Nadim Sitapuri states:

> So far as the first humorous newspaper of Urdu is concerned, Akhtaruddaulah, the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has characterised the *Mazaq* of Rampur as the first such newspaper. It was issued 21 years before the first issue of *Awadh Punch*, in 1855. The following couplet was always printed on its title-page:
>
> A paper to laugh and make others laugh;
> A clever guy and incarnation of humour.[1]

Nadim Sitapuri then goes on to quote *Akhtar Shahenshahi*:

> *Mazaq*, Rampur; Muhalla Dariba, District Moradabad; weekly; 8 small-size sheets; every Thursday; annual subscription from those who subscribe to *Survar-e-Qaisari*: Re. 1; Rs. 2 from others; proprietor: Hakim Ahmad Raza Lakhnavi; editor: Maulvi Abdul Jalil No'mani; printer: Saiyyid Tehvar Husain; from Matba'-e-Ahmadi; issued 7 January 1855.

The noted scholar Dr. Abdus Salam Khurshid fell into the same error. Talking about *Awadh Punch* he wrote:

> It would be wrong to infer from this that humorous journalism began with *Awadh Punch*. A number of humorous newspapers were issued before *Awadh Punch*. On the 7th of January 1855, for instance, the *Mazaq* was issued from Rampur...
>
> The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has mentioned not only the *Mazaq* but also the *Sarvar-e-Qaisari* of Rampur. There is a separate entry also for Matba'-e-Ahmadi. About the later he

1. Nadim Sitapuri, *Hamari Zuban* (1 November 1957), p. 7.

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writes: "Matba'-e-Ahmadi: Rampur, District Moradabad; Muhalla: Dariba; proprietor: Hakim Ahmad Raza Lakhnavi; Calligrapher: Alimuddin; pressman: Kallan; started: 1 May 1884." In connection with *Sarvar-e-Qaisari*, the author writes:

> Earlier this newspaper was published from Matba'-e-Ahmadi by Hakim Muhammad Raza; Rampur Muhalla Dariba; weekly; 6 sheets average. Now, from January 1888, it is published by Haider Ali Khan from Matba'-e-Haider at Katra Jalaluddin Khan; annual subscription from rulers of states: Rs. 24; from gentlemen: Rs. 12; from the poor Rs. 6. Calligrapher: Alimuddin Barelvi; first issued 1 May 1884.

What emerges from the above extracts may be stated as follows. Hakim Muhammad Raza started a press by the name of Matba'-e-Ahmadi on 1 May 1884 and issued an Urdu newspaper known as *Sarvar-e-Qaisari* under the editorship of his son, Hakim Ahmad Raza. This newspaper continued to be published under the same managcment and ownership till December 1887. In January 1888 there was a change in ownership and editorship. The *matba'* too was changed.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has mentioned only one printing house at Rampur till 1888, and this was Matba'-e-Ahmadi. It was here that the *Mazaq* was printed. This *matba,'* it is clearly stated in *Akhtar Shahenshahi*, was established in 1884. How was it then possible to print a newspaper in it in 1855?

The truth is that with the publication of *Awadh Punch* a taste for humorous newspapers became common throughout the country and *Punch*-like newspapers began to be issued from many places. Serious newspapers began to publish humorous supplements. The facts given in *Akhtar Shahenshahi* confirm the statement. This is exactly the situation in the case of *Mazaq*. It was in fact a supplement of *Sarvar-e-Qaisari* first issued on 7 January 1885. A calligraphic error might have changed 1885 to 1855.

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7

Punjab Newspapers and Periodicals

Simla Akhbar, Simla

It is difficult to ascertain the year of the first issue of *Simla Akhbar*. Natrajan has the following to say on this subject:[1]

> In Simla too Sheikh Abdullah started the first weekly paper lithographed in Nagri character– the *Simla Ukhbar*. The 1848 report described the paper as very well got up but referred to the script as "clumsy" and explained that it was used to induce the Rajas and other residents of the hills to patronise it, Hindi being the language in general use. It was described as a carefully edited paper with interesting articles. Hindus subscribed to as many as 22 copies, Europeans 8, while 20 were distributed free of charge. The monthly income was Rs. 30 and expenditure Rs. 40.

The details of publication as given in the above extract are also confirmed from *Khairkhwah-e-Hind*, Mirzapur (which had published the official report for 1848):[2]

1. Natrajan, *A History of Indian Journalism*, p. 52.
2. Cited in "Urdu rasail par ek nazar", *Zuban* (Delhi).

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No.	*Names of Newspaper*	*Place of Publication*	*Editor*	*Circulation*
20	Simla Akhbar	Simla	Sh. Abdullah	50

The official report for 1849 indicates that the newspaper had closed down that year. The reason for this, as suggested in the report, was that it was published in awkward Nagri script. The report for the next year, however, shows that it was again revived in 1850 and that in the very first year of its new life it reached a circulation of 66.

Garcin de Tassy has four times referred to *Simla Akhbar* in his lectures and once to Matba'-e-*Simla Akhbar*. The first reference is to be found in the first Lecture: "Anyone interested in Urdu literature may subscribe to the *Urdu Akhbar* of Simla which will regularly reach him in Paris by post." (Lecture 1, 3 December 1850). At the time that the *Simla Akhbar* came to be issued a second time, the *Koh-e-Nur* and *Darya-e-Nur* of Lahore had already come into existence. The popularity of the Urdu newspaper had reached such a peak that, in the very first year of its publication, the circulation of *Koh-e-Nur* had reached the figure of 227 copies.

The main reason for the closure of *Simla Akhbar* in 1849 was given (in the official report) as its awkward Nagri script. When, however, it was revived in 1850 as a fortnightly, it might have changed its script though nothing can be said with certainty. We do not know if it was still published in the Nagri script or had changed over to Urdu script. The reference in Garcin de Tassy, however, would suggest that it was published in Urdu script and the language too was Urdu. The next reference by de Tassy to *Simla Akhbar* is in his 1854 *Lecture*, and this reference too suggests that the language as well as the script of the newspaper was Urdu: "*Simla Akhbar* is published from Simla. It is a very good newspaper. It is edited by Sheikh Abdullah who is proficient in both English and Hindustani. Hindustani is his mother tongue."

Natrajan in his *History of Indian Journalism* has totally ignored the fact of the second closure of *Simla Akhbar*. Garcin de Tassy, however, makes a reference to the fact in his sixth Lecture (2 December 1855):

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Now some of the old newspapers that I have already introduced to you have closed down. Their names are: *Zaerin-e-Hind*, Benaras..., *Bagh-o-Bahar*, Benaras..., *Benaras Gazette* ..., *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*, Delhi, *Miftah-al-Akhbar* (Meerut), *Darya-e-Nur* (Lahore), *Simla Akhbar*...

In the light of the above statement which is based on official report, it can be safely asserted that *Simla Akhbar* had closed down by 2 December 1855.

In his twenty ninth Lecture too de Tassy has made a reference to *Simla Akhbar*. Owing to the fact that the statement is controversial, a long quotation would not be out of place:

> First of all I would like to speak about a well-known Englishman, Sir Herbert Edwards, who died last year on 22 December...He was a strong man of courage and distinguished in learning. I wish to speak about him since he was deeply attached to Hindustani language. The newspaper which is published from Simla was issued under his patronage. Its language is Urdu but since the majority of its subscribes are Hindus it is printed in Devnagri script in order to please them.

This indicates that *Simla Akhbar* was in circulation in 1869. (The twenty ninth *Lecture* of de Tassy was delivered on 6 December 1869). What is surprising is the fact that de Tassy made no reference to the newspaper during the long span of 14 years although there are a number of references to other Punjab newspapers. Under the circumstances it is difficult to decide whether de Tassy's reference is to the newspaper that was in circulation before 1855 or to some newspaper with the same name that was issued in 1869 or a little earlier.

Referring to the Urdu-Hindi controversy, de Tassy makes the following comment:

> In connection with the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the meeting of the Allahabad Institute held towards the end of the previous year, is of much significance. There were heated discussions the details of which were published in Lucknow journals. A remarkable thing about the meeting was that all those who were opposed to Urdu made their fiery speeches against Urdu not in Hindi but in Urdu.

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The Urdu-Hindi controversy was again raised in the next meeting of the Allahabad Institute held on 25 December 1868. It was decided there that the Dev Nagri script should be encouraged though distinction between Hindi and Urdu was not to be stressed even if Hindi was to be called Hindawi or Urdu was to be known as Dakhini. The language was to remain the same and the idiom too was to remain the same.

The British government seems to be in favour of the movement. It is believed that official support to Hindi would please the Hindus. The official patronage of Hindi seems to be based on political considerations since the Hindus are in a majority in the country. The consequences that would ensue from the use of Hindi in offices and courts in the North-Western Province, Oudh and the Punjab are considered in detail in an article in *Indian Daily News*.

The Hindus are generally inclined towards eschewing of Arabic and Persian vocabulary from the language. There are some Hindus who would rather prefer the use of Roman script. This feeling has obviously been engendered in their mind by their hostility towards the idea of Islamic rule.

In his 1869 *Lecture* de Tassy has not said anything about the editor of the (new?) *Simla Akhbar*, nor has he given any other details about the paper. Under the circumstances, to regard the 1855 *Simla Akhbar* as the same as the 1869 paper would not be correct. Siddiqui, however, has preferred the 1869 statement in the *Lectures* to the earlier two statements, and this he has done in connection with 1848 *Simla Akhbar*. He has totally ignored the facts of the closure and re-issue (in 1849 and 1850 respectively) of the newspaper. Siddiqui does not even seem to be aware of its second closure in 1855.

The detailed reference to the Hindi-Urdu controversy in de Tassy's *Lectures* would suggest that the later *Simla Akhbar* was issued in 1867 as a measure to please the Hindu community. The patronage of Sir Herbert Edwards too suggests the same. In the absence of objective evidence, however, the above may be taken only to be a reasonable surmise.

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Koh-e-Nur, Lahore

Akhbar Koh-e-Nur is the first Urdu-language and Persian script newspaper from the Punjab. Its proprietor and editor, Munshi Har Sukh Rai was an experienced and intelligent journalist. He belonged to Sikandrabad (Dist. Buland Shahar) and had already served as the editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed* (Meerut).

There is difference of opinion among scholars about the date of issue of *Koh-e-Nur*. The author of *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi* makes the following statement:

> Most scholars have suggested 1841 as the year of the first issue of *Koh-e-Nur*. In fact, it was first issued in 1850. There are a few early issues of the paper in the Library of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu. The issue dated 5 July 1851 bears the number 53. Beneath the date-line we find the following remark: "This newspaper is published twice a week, every Saturday and Tuesday." If, on the one hand, it gives us the information that in the very first year of its life the paper had achieved a bi-weekly circulation: it makes, on the other hand, the work of the computation of the date of the first issue difficult.

The suggestion made by Siddiqui is not new as other scholars before him—Kaifi, Abdussalam Khurshid and Natrajan —have already settled the matter of the date. A reference to *As'ad-al-Akhbar* dated 23 January 1850 is inevitable in a discussion of the date. We find the following there:

> *Koh-e-Nur* (Lahore) has started publication from the 14th of January under the editorship of Munshi Har Sukh Rai who was earlier the editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed*, Meerut. People had previously been very eager to get news of the Punjab. Kashmir and Kabul. This paper would now satisfy that desire. There would now be no need to depend upon translations from English newspapers. The *Koh-e-Nur* will be issued every Monday four times a month...

The above statement settles the matter of the first issue of the newspaper in an authoritative manner.

The study of the *Koh-e-Nur* (1851) is important from many points of view. Only five issues of the 1851 volume of the *Koh-*

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e-Nur are preserved in the Library of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Hind), Aligarh:

Volume	*Number*	*Date*
2	50	24 June 1851 Tuesday
2	52	1 July 1851 Tuesday
2	53	5 July 1851 Saturday
2	54	8 July 1851 Tuesday
2	55	12 July 1851 Saturday

On all these issues we find the following remark printed: "This newspaper is printed twice a week on every Saturday and Tuesday...Anyone interested in getting an article or advertisement printed in it may do so by paying 6 as. per line. The charge will be 8 as. if the matter is less than six lines." According to *As'ad-al-Akhbar* the *Koh-e-Nur* had started as a weekly but a reference to the above-mentioned issues reveals the fact that in 1851 it had become a bi-weekly. Since the earlier issues of 1850 are not extant, it is difficult to say at what time the *Koh-e-Nur* became a bi-weekly.

None of the issues of 1852 is extant. Only three issues of 1853 have been preserved (No. 47, 51, 52). These three issues indicate that the paper was again a weekly in 1853. It was published only on Tuesdays. The issues of 1854-55 preserved in the Library of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Hind), Aligarh and Lytton Library (Aligarh Muslim University Library) also indicate that in those years too the paper was only a weekly, published on Tuesdays.

In the opinion of Abdussalam Khurshid, Maulana Ahsan Marharvi and Kaifi, the newspaper was a weekly from 1856 to 1858 too.

Siddiqui has made another interesting statement:

> Although most of the newspapers then published were instrumental in the promotion of the policies of the East India Company Government, *Koh-e-Nur* was a little ahead of others in the field. This was the reason why the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* was so much lionised by the native rulers of the Punjab, specially the Maharajahs of Patiala, Kashmir etc. It was owing to their patronage that the *Koh-e-Nur* made such

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progress. In the beginning it was a weekly. Soon, however, it came to be published twice and then thrice a week.

In another place he writes: "In the very first year of its existence the *Koh-e-Nur* became a bi-weekly."[1] It is a surprising statement since none of the issues of 1850 is extant, nor is there any reference to the 1850 issues in the government report. From where did Siddiqui get the information that in 1850 the *Koh-e-Nur* had become a bi-weekly? The statement that *Koh-e-Nur* eventually came to be published thrice a week "in the very first year of its existence" is entirely unfounded.

Kaifi too has made a similar revelation: "In 1883, the *Koh-e-Nur* became a daily, then again changed into a weekly." This is not a correct statement. A reference to the *Koh-e-Nur* of 1883 does not confirm it. It categorically states: "Akhbar *Koh-e-Nur* which is published twice a week—every Saturday and Wednesday..." (*Koh-e-Nur*, 31 October 1883). A reference to the various issues of the volume of 1886 reveals that in that year the *Koh-e-Nur* was published thrice a week: "Akhbar *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore, which is greatly valued throughout the country...This newspaper is published thrice a week—every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday."

A reference to *As'ad-al-Akhbar* indicates that in the beginning *Koh-e-Nur* consisted of 6 sheets but the extant issues of 1851 reveal that in that year it was printed on eight pages of $12'' \times 8''$ size. Every page had two columns, and each column contained about 25 lines.

In the issues of the *Koh-e-Nur* from 1853 to 1855 the size, the number of columns and that of lines in each column was the same as in the extant issues of 1851. The number of pages had, however, gone up to 16. It could occasionally be increased even to 18. According to Maulana Ahsan Marehravi, the number of pages decreased to 12 in 1857. In 1886, however, the paper was printed on large sized 16 pages. The number of pages could be increased according to need.

And now a word about the subscription rate. According to the advertisement in the *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, dated 28 January 1850, the rate was Rs. 18 annually. Advanced subscription rate

1. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 300.

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was Rs. 12. The 1851 issues, however, bear the following rates: monthly: Rs. 1-8 as.; annual: Rs. 11-0. The rates continued to be the same till Vol. 5, No. 52, dated 26 December 1854. There was an Interesting announcement in the issue dated 2 January 1855:

> Why should I not be proud of my good fortune and why should I not be grateful to my well-wishers that they honour me so much?...I want to reduce the price (of the newspaper) from Rs. 1-8 as. monthly to Rs. 1-4 as. as a gesture of gratitude...I hope that my benefactors shall continue to be kind to me as they have always been in the past.

In 1883 the annual subscription from the rich was Rs. 2 and from the common people Rs. 1-8 as. In 1886 the rates were as follows:

Subscribers	*Annual*	*Half-yearly*	*Quarterly*
Rulers	Rs. 30.00	Rs. 15.00	Rs. 7-8
High Class gentry	Rs. 20.00	Rs. 10.00	Rs. 6.00
Common people	Rs. 16.00	Rs. 8.00	Rs. 5.00
Bonafide Students	Rs. 11.00	Rs. 6.00	Rs. 4.00

The *Koh-e-Nur* was issued under the patronage of the Company government. This fact is revealed not only by a study of the newspaper but also by the official report. In the report for 1850 the phrase "Govt. patronage" was used, and in the report for the next year the following remark is found: "*Koh-e-Noor*, a paper, was produced and conducted on principles advocated by the Government." Inspite of the government patronage, however, Munshi Har Sukh Rai, the editor of *Koh-e-Nur*, a forthright man, never hesitated in criticising the government on just grounds. The following comment on the recruitment of Englishmen to civil service is a case in point:

> It is learnt that another committee of the kind that had been formed in connection with Englishmen's examination in Urdu and Persian would now be constituted. Certain new regulations too regarding examinations would be formulated to make the examination a little more difficult. The questions for the Englishmen's examination would be made at Calcutta College and there too the answer scripts would be

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examined. This is no doubt excellent arrangement. At present whatever little knowledge (of Urdu etc.) English officers possess at the time of recruitment is completely forgotten soon after the selection has been made.

(Owing to this lack of knowledge of the local language) the subordinate officers begin to dominate them. Even otherwise, errors of judgment are made. An Assistant Bahadur who has been posted here asks his chief clerk to write a report on the file and then issues his orders on the basis of of his subordinate's notings.

Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid too has expressed a similar opinion about the role played by *Koh-e-Nur*:

It is generally said about the *Koh-e-Nur* that this newspaper flourished on flattery and Government patronage. It may possibly be true but one thing is clear that the *Koh-e-Nur* was often critical of the Government too, and that the criticism was often rather harsh. Once, for example, there appeared in it an article on the district administration in which the dishonesty of the officers, maladministration, nepotism and bureaucratic delay were severely criticised.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai has himself said something to the same effect. In an editorial he pointed out that he had been very fortunate in winning the good-will of his friends and admirers. He went on to write with great humility that he did not deserve so much good will. He could, he said, often be harsh. He had severely criticised the Adjutant Magistrate of Lahore and some other officers whom he considered to be lacking in integrity or to be tyrannical and unjust.

Har Sukh Rai was not only a fearless and truthful journalist but also a man of high and noble ideals who regarded journalism to be a means of serving the nation. He thought truthfulness and freedom of expression to be essential for a journalist. This is confirmed by a number of other statements he made in his editorial comments. When in 1856 there was a move to impose restrictions on newspapers, Har Sukh Rai wrote an editorial "Azadi-e-Matabe" or "Freedom of the Press," an extract from which is given below:

Let it be known to journalists and newspapermen of the

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country and to the managers of printing-houses that these days there is a proposal before the Legislative Council of India to make a law by which printers' right to publish would be curtailed. The Government would thereby have a right to intervene in matters relating to press. It is everyone's duty now to unite and make concerted efforts to prevent the Government from enacting such a law...Otherwise, the press and newspapers would be of no value. However, it is difficult to believe that the Government which itself has given us so much freedom would do anything to take it away.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai believed that for the stability of the Government and for welfare of the people, the presence of honest and experienced officers was essential. This conviction led him not to tolerate the incompetence, laziness or lapse of any kind on the part of any official. He would not make any distinction between high or low officials but would expose whomsoever he found to be at fault. He would do his best to bring the true facts to light before the common people and the Government. The note of bitterness and harshness that would occasionally creep into his style was mostly caused by his concern for public welfare. There never was in it the minutest touch of malice of a personal kind:

News from Muzaffar Garh (Dist. Khan Garh)

...It is all because of the incompetence of the (subordinate) staff. Sikhs and Multanis have here been recruited as clerks. The work of the court suffers a lot. Even the chief clerk is a Multani Sikh who is all the time repeating "sat bachan, sat bachan" (truthful words, truthful words) but has made himself a nuisance for the Sahib. The District Collector has therefore sent a report to the Commissioner Sahib and the Punjab Board (of Revenue) apprising them of the fact that the Multani and Sikh clerks spoil and hinder work. In my opinion it would be proper to suspend these people altogether and replace them by Hindustani staff.

There is no doubt that the sympathies of Munshi Har Sukh Rai lay with the Company government and he regarded its continuance in the country as essential for national welfare.

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This naturally prejudiced him against the rulers of native states whose corrupt lives, love for luxury and acts of injustice filled him with disgust and indignation. He thought these rulers to be harmful for the Company government as well as the people of India. He regarded it his duty to expose them as much as he could. This is what he had to say about the marriage of Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh to the daughter of his Prime Minister:

News from Lucknow

> His Exalted Highness was married to the daughter of the Minister and the feasting in that connection continued for a few days. Although the Minister had not earlier been happy with the idea of marrying off his daughter to the King, he is now reconciled since the marriage has led to an increase in his power. He has other daughters too and might marry off one of them to the heir apparent! The King's new bride was earlier engaged to marry some one else but the King did not bother about this, and told the Minister what use he "was if his daughter could not be "made use of" by the King! In return for this service the Minister has been rewarded with *Jagir* with an income of one lakh rupees annually. The Begum has been given a *jagir* worth nine lakh rupees annually. The country (of Oudh) is at peace and all is right with the world!
>
> (*Koh-e-Nur*, 24 June 1851)

The merger of the state of Oudh (in 1856) was not merely due to the moral corruption of the Nawab and his indifference towards the affairs of the state but it was in fact a direct result of a deep laid conspiracy on the part of the Company government though the former factors too were responsible to a great deal. The mutual relations between the rulers of native states and their subjects as well as the campaign launched by journalists were also contributory factors. The 13 February 1855 issue of the *Koh-e-Nur* (one year before the merger) confirms all this:

> The condition of the land of Oudh is very bad. Only God would be its protector if the British government did not intervene at this stage. Things have come to such a pass that the gentry and the *jagirdars* fight the royal forces. Though

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the royal army is generally victorious yet at least on one occasion it met with ignominious defeat and that too at the hands of a *chakladar*. Reinforcement was sent to defeat the *jagirdar* that had thus humiliated the royal army. Under these circumstances the British have a right to intervene according to the treaty between the state of Oudh and the Company government. The time has now come to do something about the situation so that things might improve and God's creatures might be spared trouble.

Another news of a similar nature is given below:

News from Hyderabad Deccan

The Englishman writes that violence, robbery, tyranny and maladministration are still rampant here...(and it is reported) that the districts of Nagpur would be taken away from the Nizam-al-Mulk in exchange for a huge amount of money.

(*Koh-e-Nur*, 5 July 1851)

Munshi Har Sukh Rai was not only an alert and well-informed journalist but also a man of taste who loved poetry. His newspaper was not confined only to news but in his hands it had become an organ for the promotion of good poetry and prose. The *Koh-e-Nur* published not only the Urdu ghazals and *qasidas* of contemporary poets but also Persian works of the standing of Munshi Har Gopal Tafta. The opening verses of a *ghazal* by Tafta, published in the issue dated 5 June 1851, may be quoted below:

Gham b-dil, khun dar jigar, sauda b-sar daram, be-a;
Dad as dast-e-to ai bedadgar daram, be-a.
(Sorrow in the heart, blood in the liver,
madness in the head, I have. O, Come!
Appreciation from you, O cruel-hearted, I have O, come!

In the 14 November 1854 issue of the *Koh-e-Nur* we have a *qasida* by Zauq. The concluding couplet of this ode is given below:

Muntahi hon na kabhi teri sifat-e-neku
Gar bayan kijye ta hashr sifat ba'd sifat.
(Your excellent virtues shall never be exhausted
Even if they be described till Doomsday, virtue by virtue)

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Not satisfied only with the occasional publication of poetry, Munshi Har Sukh Rai instituted a weekly *mushaira* (poetic symposium) with the aim of promoting Urdu language and literature. He used to publish selected *ghazals* from each *mushaira* in the *Koh-e-Nur*. This not only raised the quality of literary taste of the readers but also gave encouragement to the love of poetry in the Punjab. It helped the spread and development of poetry in the province. The following extract may be quoted from the *Koh-e-Nur* dated 21 March 1854:

> Information is hereby given to the lovers of the *mushaira* at Matba'-e-*Koh-e-Nur* that the meeting (of the *mushaira*) that formerly used to be held at seven o'clock in the evening shall now be held at five o'clock as decided by friends. The request therefore is that in future friends may kindly grace the occasion by arriving at five o'clock. The proposal is also that in future selected ghazals from each *mushaira* shall be published in the newspaper and the *misra'-e-tarah* (a line of verse proposed as a metrical unit for compositions of *ghazals* by all the poets attending a *mushaira*) shall not also be announced for the next *mushaira*. The *misara'-e-tarah* for this week's *mushaira* are as follows:

Persian: Kulah kaj karda-o, khanjar bekaf
mastana mi ayad.

Urdu: Ghalib ko bura kahte ho,
achcha nahin karte.

The Urdu *misra'-e-tarah* advertised in the issue of 11 April 1854 is:

Uska didar jo hoga to qayamat hogi

The promise made in March and April 1854 was fulfilled in the later issues of *Koh-e-Nur* where we find selected *ghazals* from various *mushairas*. It would be too long to quote any of them here.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai performed invaluable services to the cause of Urdu in the Punjab. By the establishment of the Matba'-e-*Koh-e-Nur* he not only laid the foundation for the rich and luscious growth of the Urdu language in the Punjab but also saw the garden bloom and spread rich fragrance everywhere. His example was followed by a large number of people

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who were inspired by his love for Urdu to do everything they could for its development. Within a few years' devoted and dedicated efforts many stages of development had been crossed. This is not exaggeration but a statement of fact. Munshi Har Sukh Rai himself was conscious of his achievement and he proudly stated:

> Let it be known to the valued readers of the truthful *Koh-e-Nur* that the Matba' (printing-house) whose well-known name is Matba'-e-*Koh-e-Nur* has been working since January 1850. At the time of its establishment there was no other printing-press in this newly-conquered territory of Punjab, nor had the (British) administration here then been firmly founded. Thus the age of this Protector of Nobility is now five years and has, so to say, reached the stage where it can make distinctions between what is good and what is evil, what is harmful and what is advantageous, for the common people: God be thanked that it is heedful towards these.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai went on to point out that "by the grace of God, arts and sciences have made so much progress in the Punjab as would not have been possible in Hindustan in twenty years." Having made this comment he goes on to list the names of newspapers and journals that had then started publication in the Punjab. He mentions, for example, *Riyaz-e-Nur* (Multan), *Chashmah-e-Faiz* (Sialkot), *Lahore Gazettee*, *Matla'-al-Anwar* (Gujrat), etc. He concludes by saying: "About fifteen or sixteen scions of nobility, so to say, have been born during the last fifteen years."

It was mainly because of the personality of Munshi Har Sukh Rai that *Koh-e-Nur* had become the most popular newspaper in the Punjab. In the very first year of its issue it had reached a circulation of 227 copies. The issue dated 16 January 1855 indicates that the circulation had gone upto 350 towards the end of 1854. Munshi Har Sukh Rai has mentioned the fact proudly in his editorial:

> How greatly valued was my nonsense that I found my newspaper being read, on the one hand, by college students and, on the other, by lovers of arts and sciences in their search

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for wisdom...I am deeply grateful to those admirers who, out of their generosity, regard my rubbish as revelation... Towards the close of this year the number of my subscribers has gone up to about 350.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai was justly proud of his achievement since at a time when Urdu journalism was still in its infancy, this large number of subscribers was certainly highly creditable. Garcin de Tassy too has in his *Lectures* mentioned *Koh-e-Nur* at a number of places. He made the following comment on its popularity:

In 1854 there were 37 printing presses and 33 journals in the North-Western province and the Punjab. The most popular and the one with the largest circulation was the urdu newspaper, *Koh-e-Nur*, of Lahore, but the number of subscribers of even this newspaper was not more than 394.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai was a popular journalist of national fame. He was a man with a charismatic personality. He encouraged journalistic and literary talent not only within the province of the Punjab but gave impetus to similar ventures in other parts of the country too. As Kaifi has put it:

The number of literary men and scholars associated with three newspapers of the Punjab has been the largest in the country compared with any other newspaper with the possible exception of *Awadh Akhbar*. The three newspapers were: *Koh-e-Nur*, *Paisa Akhbar* and *Zamindar*. *Koh-e-Nur* had the distinction that it was edited by men holding various faiths—Hindu, Muslim and Christian—without regard to their personal creed. Among its editors may be mentioned Nadir Ali Shah, Tajuddin, Munshi Nawalkishore, Mirza Moahhid Jalandhari, Munshi Nisar Ali Shohrat, Maulvi Saiful Haq Adib, Maulvi Muhammad Din Fauq and Munshi Mahram Ali Chishti.

Munshi Jagat Narayan, the son of Munshi Har Sukh Rai, tried to keep up the traditions of his father after the latter's death. However, after the death of Munshi Jagat Narayan in 1895, the newspaper failed to maintain its standard, and finally, having faced many storms, it closed down in 1904.

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Khurshid-e-Punjab, Lahore:

Koh-e-Nur was not the only journalistic venture of Munshi Har Sukh Rai; in January 1856 he also issued a literary monthly known as *Khurshid-e-Punjab*. Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid writes:

> The size of *Khurshid-e-Punjab* was the same as that of *Lail-o-Nahar*. There used to be 48 pages in every issue excluding the title-page. The annual subscription rate was Rs. 4 which was much less than that of other contemporary journals.[1]

The first issue contains the following statement of aims under the title "Introduction":

> Necessary it is that first of all the reason for the rise and manifestation of this Sun of Punjab be made apparent to Truth-knowing Wits. The submission is: that the aim of recommending this pleasant Prescription is (to spread the Urdu language) in Punjab where it has not so far become very common. The Urdu language is in ascendancy in the present age. It is commonly used in government offices. It is the best-loved medium for poetry and literature. People try their best to learn to speak this language perfectly. There are a large number of people who have come to an office right from school without having completed their education. There are also many people who cannot buy books of law and of other arts and sciences owing to their low salaries. They are thus deprived of further promotions. In this periodical, therefore, a number of such articles would be published as would explain the nature of Urdu language. Students would greatly benefit from this periodical. People working in government offices would come to know about the progress of arts and sciences. They would thus be attracted towards these subjects.
>
> (*Khurshid-e-Punjab*,[2] January 1856)

The aims and objectives are followed by a discussion of the books of science; the advantages of steam ships, railways, telegraph and telephone are discussed. We get the following as a

1. Abdussalam Khurshid, pp. 142-43.
2. The first three issues are preserved in the Punjab University Library.

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delineation of the "plan" that the *Khurshid-e-Punjab* had set before itself:

> There will be articles in it on the improvement of morals, system of education, culture, good habits, science, law, physics, commerce and the national economic production, architecture, state, geography, history and production, history and magic. There will also be jokes, wit and humour. A study of these articles will improve the understanding and give insight.
>
> (*Khurshid-e-Punjab*, January 1856)

The first issue contains an article entitled "Bahs-e-ilmi" (a discussion about learning) which is continued through the second and the third issues. The first issue presents a survey of the development of learning. It expresses the view that learning declined during the Sikh regime as the ruling "nation" itself had little of it. However, a prophecy was made about the gradual development of learning during the British rule:

> (During the coming days) whatever advantages there are in learning would all be achieved. The condition and ways of life of the people would change for the better; they would become more cultivated. There would be more communication with one another, greater comfort and all kinds of worldly happiness. The whole country would be transformed; forests would become gardens, and gardens would become the envy of the Garden of Eden...There would be greater inner freedom. There would thus be such a revolution as would completely transform not only the appearance but also the inner content. What we have here written should not suggest that all this would take place in a day or two; these changes would take place after long ages.
>
> (*Khurshid-e-Punjab*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 23)

There is a thoughtful article on the system of education in the same issue dealing in a logical manner with the evils of the then prevalent educational system. It is claimed in the article that owing to the absence of the "noble" sciences (mathematics, physics, geography) from the syllabus, the end-products of education are worthless individuals who have neither the ability to achieve anything in the economic field nor do they

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have much awareness of the world. As human beings too—in the moral field—they are totally inadequate. "Some people might think," the article continues,

> that our aim is to praise English and to encourage its study. So, let it be clear, we are not suggesting that English should be learnt by all. The learning of English involves much waste of time since it is a foreign language. What we are trying to suggest is that whatever the medium of instruction, the quality of education should be good. The best thing would be to give instruction in a native language, and in our opinion, Urdu is the most suitable language for this purpose. The method of education, however, should be such as to save time so that much knowledge may be gained in a short period of time.
>
> (January 1856, p. 32)

Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid has summed up the importance, utility and stylistic individuality of the articles published in *Khurshid-e-Punjab* in the following words:

> Though the articles published in *Khurshid-e-Punjab* were of a diverse nature—historial, ethical, geographical, etc.—it was scientific essays which were more prominently published. These essays constituted the most distinctive feature of the journal. They were written in a pure, fluent style. The essays, for example, on atmosphere, air pressure, rainfall, etc are written in an interesting style. The beauty of expression. however, does not affect the informative character of the articles.
>
> It was in 1854 that telegraph lines were laid in India on an extensive scale. The line from Agra to Bombay was 800 miles long and that between Calcutta to Peshawar ranged over 1600 miles. Among the common people it was then known as "dak bijli." In the second issue of *Khurshid-e-Punjab* there is an illustrated article on "dak bijli." The pictures and sketches are lithographically printed, and they are of a very fine quality. The second instalment was printed in the March issue. In order to present the subject in greater clarity, another article by Qazi Safdar Ali is also

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printed, an article that had earlier been read before a large audience at Agra. There are sketches in this article too.

(*Journalism*, p. 142)

Darya-e-Nur, Lahore

The issue of *Koh-e-Nur* in 1849 proved a good augury for journalism in the Punjab as the very next year another newspaper started publication from Lahore. It was known as *Darya-e-Nur*. According to the official report, it was published every Sunday, and the number of its subscribers had risen to 100 in the very first year of its publication.

The *Darya-e-Nur* probably did not pay much regard to the correctness of news nor was there much balance in its presentation. It might have been because of these reasons that it was soon engulfed in controversies. There is a letter to the editor in the *Koh-e-Nur* dated 24 June 1851 which points out that a certain report about the police published in *Darya-e-Nur* was false and malicious. The letter is supposed to be written by "a well-wisher of the people." It says that the "Well-wisher" was pained by a report in the *Darya-e-Nur* which had falsely accused the police of a bad "bandobast" (administration). The report roused his anger against this false maligning of the police. The letter, says the "Well-wisher," is written to bring to the public notice the lack of probity on the part of the editor of *Darya-e-Nur*.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai, the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* was public-spirited and a man of integrity. Though he himself was occasionally critical of officials, he would not tolerate false accusations against well-meaning and efficient government officers. His ire was roused by the false report in *Darya-e-Nur*, and he wrote that a careful study of the news about police maladministration in *Darya-e-Nur* dated 22 June 1851 made him regret the perversity of such an attitude. He pointed out that the officials then posted were excellent and certainly better than their predecessors. These police officials, he continued, were honest, just and efficient. They made no distinction between the rich and the poor. Thefts, robberies and violence had become rare. He thanked the officials for the good care they had taken of the people. In conclusion he challenged the

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editor of *Darya-e-Nur* to give any solid proof against the police administration; otherwise, he should publicly confess that whatever he had written was false.

The comments made by Munshi Har Sukh Rai served only to intensify the controversy. The editor of *Darya-e-Nur* must have written something harsh in the issue dated 30 June 1851 since it provoked Munshi Har Sukh Rai to use equally harsh language and to use personal invective against the editor of *Darya-e-Nur*. From this reply we indirectly learn that the first editor of *Darya-e-Nur* (Muhibuddin Husain) had by now been removed and his position had now been taken by one Sunder Lal. It also shows that the successor was no better than the original editor, and that the change had not brought about any improvement in policy.

The report for 1852 reveals the fact that this newspaper was in circulation in the earlier months of the year. Garcin de Tassy too confirms this;

> We will now cast a glance at the newspapers published from the Punjab. A look at the names of most of these newspapers would suggest that they had a peculiar interest in the dissemination of knowledge since the word "nur" (light) is generally appended to the names: we have *Darya-e-Nur* from Lahore. Another published twice a week is *Koh-e-Nur*.

The *Darya-e-Nur* did not survive for long. The official report published in January 1855 reveals that it had closed down in 1854. Garcin de Tassy too has mentioned the fact in his Lecture dated 2 December 1855:

> Some of the older newspapers I have already introduced to you have now closed down. Such newspapers include:...the *Darya-e-Nur* of Lahore...

The *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 6 June 1854, indicates that the *Darya-e-Nur* had by that time closed down: "What harm has the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* done that some journalists are acting like the sting of a scorpion towards him...the *Darya-e-Nur* (the river of light)...which however soon dried up..." The parenthetical comment indicates that the *Darya-e-Nur* had by then (6 June 1854) closed down.

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Riyaz-e-Nur, Multan

Riyaz-e-Nur is the third newspaper to have come out of the Punjab. It was first issued from Sialkot in 1851. It was printed on 12 pages of 29×19 cm size. There used to be two columns on each page, and twenty lines in each column. The following verses were printed on the title-page as the motto:

Nihan sad rauza-e-nur ashkar ast
Riyaz-e-nur bagh-e-nau bahar ast
(A hundred gardens of light have here become manifest,
The garden of Light is a newly-blooming garden.)

It was a weekly newspaper published every Saturday. The mast-head bore the date in Hijri and Christian Calendars and also the volume and issue numbers. The first column carried the following advertisement:

"Advertisement"

This newspaper is printed every Saturday. Its price is as follows:

Annual (Advance)	Rs. 10	Later Rs. 15
Six-monthly (Advance)	Rs. 6	Later Rs. 9
Monthly (Advance)	Re. 1	Later Re. 1-8 as.

If some one discontinues subscription after 4 months, he will have to pay Rs. 9. Similarly, after eight months, Rs. 15 will have to be paid Advertisement rates: 2 as. per line. An advertisement for less than 4 lines will not be accepted. Articles of general interest will not be charged.

Owing to mismanagement the earlier issues could not be printed weekly; they were published after nine days generally. The third issue passed through a strange vicissitude: it was ready for the press but all of a sudden the calligrapher and the pressman left their jobs. The proprietor and editor of the newspaper, Muhammad Mehdi Husain Khan was now obliged to seek help from Munshi Har Sukh Rai of *Koh-e-Nur* (Lahore). The *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 24 June 1851 confirms this. It carried a letter in which it was pointed out that the press and newspaper had been established "sirf barae tafannun-e-taba'" (for self-satisfaction). The writer of the letter (the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur*)

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pointed out that he had been terribly busy during the past four months and had also incurred a debt of Rs. 1000. Two issues had till then been printed; the third was incomplete. He was, he said, in great trouble, and he was therefore seeking the latter's help in his plight.

The letter continued to tell Munshi Har Sukh Rai that the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* had started on this venture jointly with Babu Amanat Ali. Very soon, however, he left him alone and took away his share of investment. In any case, he was now requesting Munshi Har Sukh Rai to send immediately a lithographic stone from his own press and arrange to send another immediately afterwards.

As has already been pointed out the *Riyaz-e-Nur* was initially started from Sialkot, but owing to certain reasons it was later shifted to Multan. The fact is confirmed by *Koh-e-Nur*. (Vide the issue dated 6 June 1854).

An interesting fact is revealed by Rai Bahadur Pandit Shiv Narayan. He points out that as long as it remained at Sialkot it was known as *Riyaz-al-Akhbar*. It was only when it was shifted to Multan that it came to be called *Riyaz-e-Nur*.[1]

When exactly the press and the newspaper were shifted to Multan is not known. The official report for 1852, however, indicates that both were working at Multan in the early part of that year. Garcin de Tassy too writes:

> There were the following printing presses (in 1852): seven at Agra, six in Delhi, two at Meerut, two at Lahore, seven at Benaras and one each at Sardehna, Bareilly, Kanpur, Mirzapur, Indore, Ludhiana, Bharatpur, Amritsar and Multan. *Nurunala Nur* is published from Ludhiana...*Bagh-e-Nur* from Amritsar and *Riyaz-e-Nur* from Amritsar.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* makes the following statement: "*Riyaz-e-Nur*, a newspaper from Multan; issued November 1855." This is an entirely wrong statement.

Munshi Har Sukh Rai was most certainly the doyen of newspapermen and journalists in the Punjab. The newspapers published there before 1857 seem to echo the *Koh-e-Nur* in every respect—chronicling of news, its presentation and style.

1. See *Punjab Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1916).

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The general trend in the Punjab at that time was to write against the native rulers and government officials. The style is rhetorical but not infrequently degenerating to vulgarity and aggressive abuse. Gentle irony and subtle exposure are lacking. Here is a news item from *Riyaz-e-Nur* that would give us some idea of the quality of news presentation:

News from Delhi

> One of the Begums in the Fort got so angry for some inexplicable reason with one of her slave-girls that she ordered a burning rod to be inserted in her private parts. Immediately, she fainted. She was then tied in a sheet and thrown into the lane outside. The wayfarers found her crying and near death. She had life enough to narrate her horrible tale of woe. She then died. The Agent Governor has sent a report to the Government. Let us see what action is now taken.

Immediately before the great upheaval of 1857, the Punjab newspapers appear in general to have favoured the Company government. In fact, theirs was the same situation as that of Mirza Ghalib who was torn between the opposite pulls of the new and the old:

> Iman mujhe roke hai to kheenche hai mujhe kufr;
> Ka'ba mere peeche hai, kaleesa mere aage.
>
> (Faith holds me back while Infidelity attracts me too;
> The Ka'ba is at my back, the Church beckons me from in front.)

These newspapermen, like Ghalib, stood on a crossroad where they saw on one side the citadels of tradition, battered and crumbling, and on the other the onrush of new forces, the growing power of the Company government accompanied by the equal and welcome growth of arts and sciences, measures of public welfare, high administrative ability, unity and such other virtues. The native rulers were given to a life of luxury. They were indifferent to public welfare. They indulged in tyranny, and represented a decadent society in the last throes of an agonised existence that was soon to come to an end. The condition of these native states was really very bad. Justice,

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mercy, sympathy were non-existent there. The rulers were surrounded by flatterers and sycophants. They indulged in womanising on an unprecedented scale; like Raja Inder in Amanat's *Inder Sabha*[1] they danced through life in a whirl of pleasure. The bureaucracy ruled and looked after the mundane side of administration, but they ruled with an iron hand and ruled in self-interest. Their tyranny knew no bound, and it was mainly because of them that the populace turned against their rulers. There is an interesting news in *Riyaz-e-Nur* dated 3 March 1855:

News from Bhawalpur

> (It is difficult to say which news from Bhawalpur is correct and which not.) There are diverse news from there. I have come to learn now that the news about Ahmad Khan was not correct. Neither did he die nor was he wounded. There is, however, another news: a water-carrier was going along with his newly-wed bride. The Jumedar forcefully took her away and admitted her to her harem. May God indeed be praised! The like King, the like minister! The news about the man who was wounded and killed—he was another Ahmad Khan...Well, the other Ahmad Khan too cannot come out of the house. Since the time this affair took place, he has confined himself to his house. The net result of all such events is that decay and destruction are in the ascendency. The prestige of the rulers is on the way out. The subjects are miserable owing to growing tyranny. Everyone is waiting for the advent of the rule of the Company government.

The Company government, on the other hand, was no paragon of virtue. It was out to destroy the native states in its own political interest. Whatever goodwill the native rulers had among the common people was gradually and subtly being eroded by the clever devices of the Company government. The real sufferers in this game of political machinations were the poor. The following news may be of interest.

1. An opera-like performance written at the request of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow.

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News from Murshidabad

> The Calcutta newspapers reveal that these days the condition of the government of Nawab Nazim is very bad. The *durbar* has not been held for a week. There is a news that the said Nawab has been asked to attend court in some legal case. The Supreme Court has categorically told the advocates of the Nawab that in this case the presence of the advocates would not do; the Nawab would have to come in his own person.

Here is another news about the same affair:

> Sahib Doorbin from Calcutta writes that Nawab Nazim filed a suit against some Englishman of the value of Rs. 20 lakhs. In his written statement, the defendant entered such an argument as would compel the judge to record the Nawab's statement in his own presence. Though the advocate did best to convince the judge that the Nawab's statement could be recorded at Mushidabad but the judges did not relent. They said that the Nawab was a subject of the government, and has now become a plaintiff in this case. What objection should he have in coming to the court as a plaintiff? It would be proper for him to attend court in his person and get his statement recorded irrespective of social status or personal glory.

Maladministration, tyranny, corruption and violence were confined not only to places like Oudh and Delhi; these conditions prevailed everywhere. Here is a news from Patiala in the Punjab!

> The newspapers indicate that the state of Patiala too is in a bad condition. The Maharaja has adopted tyrannical and unjust ways. For this reason all the people in the administration and the common people are greatly displeased with his rule.

Another interesting comment is given below:

> Employment in the past—during the days of native monarchies—was given after a thorough scrutiny of the caste and family connections of the candidates. Since most officers came from noble families they paid some heed to the honour

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of their respective families even while doing anything wrong. Nowadays, nobody bothers about caste or family. As a result of this even the sons of washermen, weavers, barbers or vegetable-sellers become *munshis* in the *kachehri* after learning a few words. Such *munshis* (clerks) are beaten with shoes even by *chaprasis*. Even then they would not budge from their place. Gradually they bribe their way through to a respectable job...However, occupying a chair of office would not transform them into respectable people. The hidden, personal meanness would not be washed away.

It is regrettable that though the Government is doing a lot to improve the morals of its employees, it does not do anything to tackle the basic problem. The real problem is just this encouragement to the mean. Let it not be forgotten that without putting an end to this problem, the condition would not improve.

We leave the comment given above without pointing out that the perverse mentality reflected in it has not as yet left us.

There is in *Riyaz-e-Nur*, dated 21 July 1854, a passage entitled "Latifa" (a witticism) which may be quoted below:

An old clergyman in London has three wives (sic). Correct it is since "As a man grows old, his lust becomes young." Our contemporary *The Englishman* rightly pointed out that the three wives would serve three different ends. The youngest who is richly endowed with beauty would be there merely to look at. The second one, a little older but equally beautiful would satisfy the clergyman's lust. The oldest, experienced and wise, would be there to protect the other two.

There is a similar case here too. A friend of ours who is a *maulvi* wants to have four wives. The first three would serve the same purposes as outlined above but the fourth one would help the aged *maulvi sahib* in going to the toilet.

In our humble opinion it would have been better if the two gentlemen (the clergyman and the moulvi) had consoled themselves with disciples instead of wives.

The Punjab journalists were generally agressive and abusive in their writings. They did not believe insinuation or suggestion.

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They frequently indulged in attacks on everybody—officials, members of the public and other newspapermen. Consequently, others, particularly government officials, would always be looking for an opportunity to harm them. Not only the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* but also the doyen of Punjab journalists, Munshi Har Sukh Rai, had been a victim of official vengeance. He had served a sentence of imprisonment. The editorial in the *Koh-e-Nur* dated 20 May 1856 says:

> A little while ago some account of the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* was published in *Shua'-al-Shams* (Multan) but we did not give much credit to it since the editor of *Shua'-al-Shams* is hostile to the former. Recently, however, we have learnt from a friend that the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* is in fact behind the bars in Multan. An amount of Rs. 1000 is needed for bail. The case has not as yet been decided. It appears that the administrator and the subordinate staff of Multan are hostile towards the editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur*. There is not much hope of improvement in the situation. May God have mercy on him.

An account of what happened later may be quoted from the book by Abdussalam Khurshid:

> The judgement (in the case against him) was delivered on 24 June. The editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. The offence apparently was that he had written certain things against some official. The editor of *Koh-e-Nur*, Munshi Sukh Rai too had earlier been sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment for the same offence.

As a result of this sentence, the *Riyaz-e-Nur* was closed down for ever. Mehdi Husain Khan did not have the courage of re-issuing the paper after being released from jail. That put an end to the *Riyaz-e-Nur*.

Bagh-e-Nur, Amritsar:

This is the fourth newspaper to be issued from the Punjab. It was published in Persian script from Amritsar in 1851. It is referred to in *Koh-e-Nur*, 8 July 1851:

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> There is plenty of light (Nur) in the Punjab now. We have *Koh-e-Nur*, *Darya-e-Nur*, *Riyaz-e-Nur*, *Bagh-e-Nur*, *Nurun ala Nur*. Five "Nurs" have come out so far. What now remains is God's Nur only!

Garcin de Tassy too has mentioned it in his Lecture dated 1 January 1852: "*Bagh-e-Nur* is published from Amritsar..."

Like *Darya-e-Nur*, this newspaper too could not survive for long, it was closed down in 1854. There is a reference to its closure in *Koh-e-Nur* dated 16 January 1855. Garcin de Tassy too refers to its closure: "The newspapers that have closed down are:...and the *Bagh-e-Nur* of Amritsar."

Nurun-ala-Nur, Ludhiana:

This is the first Urdu newspaper from Ludhiana which started publication in 1851. Earlier, a Persian newspaper, *Ludhiana Akhbar*, had been issued by American missionaries in 1835. The *Nurun-ala-Nur* too, like other Punjab newspapers, owned its own printing press. There is a news about it (entitled "News about a New Printing Press") in the *Koh-e-Nur* dated 8 July 1851:

> It was learnt from a friend's letter that someone with the name of Muhammad Husain had established a printing press at Ludhiana which is known as Matba'-e-*Nurun-ala-Nur*. The editor of *Koh-e-Nur* was very happy to hear this news. The owner of printing presses in Hindustan thinks that Punjab is full of light (Nur). Five of these Nurs have already descended on the Punjab—*Koh-e-Nur*, *Darya-e-Nur*, *Riyaz-e-Nur*, *Bagh-e-Nur*, *Nurun-ala-Nur*. There is nothing but God's Nur ahead. It is heard that the printing press established in Bahera is also known as Nurun-ala-Nur. Since the name of the Ludhiana press has not become publicly known, we would advise it to change it to "Khuda Ka Nur" (the light of God). It would be a good name since God is immortal as well as the best.
>
> It is heard that a printing press that is going to be established in Anarkali (Lahore) is called the *Aina-e-Sikandar*...

The *Koh-e-Nur* of 12 July 1851 contains the following. It gives us the correct date of issue of the paper:

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> Last week we had written that a printing press is going to be established at Ludhiana known as *Nurun-ala-Nur*. Soon afterwards we received by post a short poem commemorating the establishment of the Matba'...May God help the Matba' prosper and make progress. It is written that at this Matba' a weekly newspaper would be printed; books too pertaining to different subjects would be printed there.

Garcin de Tassy too confirms the statement: "*Nurun-ala-Nur* is published from Ludhiana; it was issued by Muhammad Husain in 1851." The newspaper, however, did not continue for long; it was closed down forever in 1854. The fact of the closure is indicated in *Koh-e-Nur* dated 16 January 1855.

Shu'a'-al-Shams, Multan

Shu'a'-al-Shams was Punjab's seventh and Multan's second newspaper. It was first issued in 1853. Garcin de Tassy has made the following statement on the basis of the official report for 1853:

> Another newspaper has been in circulation from Multan since 1853 besides this (*Riyaz-e-Nur*) which was already there. It is known as *Shu'a'-al-Shams*. It is published by an able *dervesh* Ghulam Nasiruddin under the patronage of Maharaja Holkar.

Almost all the newspapermen of Punjab had similarity with one another in style and presentation. They were all hostile to the rulers of the native states and sympathetic to the Company government. It is understandable why it was so. The vices of the Company government—its deceit, agressiveness, selfishness and partiality—seemed insignificant when compared with the tyranny and corruption of native states. The feeling extended to the common people too. The merger of the state of Oudh was announced in February 1856. The significance of this action was not lost on intelligent observers. The following comment in *Shu'a'-al-Shams* is characteristic of the general trend of opinion at the time:

> The sun of the greatness of the state of Oudh has declined; the morning of its glory has turned into the evening of failure. The intoxication of maladministration has now been

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changed into the hangover of merger...For a long time past we have heard stories about maladministration in Oudh and have wondered when the end would come. It has come now. The editor of *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* writes on the authority of the *Englishman* that orders from East India Company have already come to the Governor General that the State of Oudh be merged with the British territories. Half of the revenue from the State is to be given to the Sultan of Oudh for his upkeep. It is said that the Governor General shall make full arrangements for the merger of Oudh before his departure for England.

Like its contemporaries, the *Shu'a'-al-Shams* too was full of praises for the administration of the Company government. He would not let an opportunity pass without commending the white rule in India. The following news is entitled "News from Multan":

...The Commissioner Sahib Bahadur has gone on a tour of Jhang...The fever epidemic is causing trouble to the people. The "bandobast" of Salsi Tehsil is going on. It is believed that the work shall be completed within two or three days... There was one grain market in the town formerly. Now out of his great concern for the welfare of the people, the Deputy Commissioner Sahib Bahadur has proposed to start another market...The land for the purpose has been granted by the government. It is believed that two *mandis* (markets) shall now go a long way in giving relief to the people.

Here is another item entitled "News from Dera Ghazi Khan:"

The Deputy Commissioner Sahib Bahadur is paying full attention to the problem of the elimination of crime. A number of villages have been affected by floods. The villages particularly affected are as follows...Such is the condition of the floods in the Indus that all these villages are under water.

The quality of news in *Shu'a'-al-Shams* was generally better than can be indicated by the items given above. Certain items published in this newspaper were highly perceptive and full of insight. Comments on current affairs were generally presented

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in an interesting and delightful style. Besides current affairs, the newspaper also specialized in what would now be called "human interest" stories. Here is one such "news":

> Recently there lived an old woman in Dera Ghazi Khan whose only subsistence was the alms she received by begging in the streets. Her clothes were torn so much so that every piece of her garments had a hundred holes in them. When she died, the *kafan* was provided by some generous person. Just a few days later an amount of Rs. 1160 was recovered from her belongings by the curiosity of the people! What use is wealth amassed in this manner?

The *Koh-e-Nur* dated 17 July 1855 contains a news entitled "News from Multan." It is based on a report in the Multan weekly *Riyaz-e-Nur*. The item indicates that *Shu'a'-al-Shams* was then in a state of decline; its lack of financial resources and mismanagement had reached the peak. Its adversary, *Riyaz-e-Nur* was then prospering and had become very popular. The decline of *Shu'a'-al-Shams* was a fact: "The editor of *Riyaz-e-Nur* Multan writes in his issue of 7 July that the Matba'-e-Shu'a'-al-Shams has greatly declined owing to circumstances; it has virtually accepted defeat and failed. Who will now sing the psalms of David..."

It was an irony of fate indeed that the local adversary who had won the race suddenly met with an ignominious end with the imprisonment of its editor. Only *Shu'a'-al-Shams* remained in the field in Multan. In two issues of *Sehr-e-Samiri* (Nos. 12 and 13, February 1857) there are a number of news items quoted from *Shu'a'-al-Shams*. This would suggest that the newspaper was still in circulation in 1857. The official report for 1857 too mentions a certain unnamed newspaper from Multan. It is probably a reference to *Shu'a'-al-Shams* whose circulation was officially stopped during the days of the mutiny:

> Censor had been easily imposed on Punjab newspapers. At Peshawar the editor of *Murtazai* was imprisoned for writing seditious articles and his newspaper was banned. This is what was done with the native newspaper at Multan also.

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Chashmah-e-Faiz, Sialkot:

This was the second newspaper from Sialkot issued in 1852, the first being *Riyaz-e-Nur*. Its owner and editor, Munshi Diwan Chand, son of Ganpat Rai (from District Gujrat), was an able and experienced journalist. His name was at the top in the list of the adversaries of Munshi Har Sukh Rai. It is the same Munshi Diwan Chand who was determined to ruin Munshi Har Sukh Rai at the time when the latter was in prison.

Garcin de Tassy refers to *Chashmah-e-Faiz* in the following words: "Lastly, a newspaper known as *Chashmah-e-Faiz* has been issued from Sialkot. It came out in June 1853."

Siddiqui too has referred to *Chashmah-e-Faiz*. He has made some peculiar statements with reference to Natrajan and *Akhtar Shahenshahi*. This is what he says on the subject:

Chashmah-e-Faiz

> Munshi Diwan Chand opened a press at Lahore by the name of *Chashmah-e-Faiz* and started a newspaper of the same name from there in 1853. The official report for 1853 suggests that the newspaper was in bad shape but the help given by the local Assistant Commissioner saved it from ruin.

Siddiqui has fallen a prey to misunderstanding since neither Natrajan nor *Akhtar Shahenshahi* confirms the statement made by him. The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has referred to only one press and to only one newspaper by the name of *Chashmah-e-Faiz* before 1857:

> *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, Sialkot; weekly; six sheets average; Tuesday; annual Rs. 15; owner, Diwan Chand; issued 1 July 1853 No. 450: *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, Lahore; manager, Diwan Chand; started 1852.

An analysis of the two statements quoted above would suggest that the Press started from Lahore in 1852 by Munshi Diwan Chand did not issue any newspaper by the name of *Chashmah-e-Faiz* in 1853. The newspaper called *Chashmah-e-Faiz* started by Munshi Diwan Chand in 1853 was not issued

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from Lahore but Sialkot. The official report as well as Garcin de Tassy's *Lectures* both confirm it. The official report says:

> Chashmah-e-Faiz of Sialkot was mentioned for the first time as having been saved from ruin by the pecuniary assistance given it by the local assistant commissioner.

In the light of the above statement it can be safely asserted that the *Chashmah-e-Faiz* started by Munshi Diwan Chand in 1853 was not a Lahore paper; it was issued from Sialkot.

Siddiqui has also referred to another newspaper called *Khurshid-e-Alam* and has made strange statements about it too. He says:

> At least two papers were issued from Punjab in 1850. *Gulzar-e-Punjab* was published from Gujranwala; its editor was Munshi Ganda Mal. The same year *Khurshid-e-Alam* started publication from Sialkot. Its editor was Munshi Diwan Chand.

Abdussalam Khurshid has, however, made the following statement about *Khurshid-e-Alam* in the light of references in the *Koh-e-Nur* (1856):

> There was rivalry between Munshi Diwan Chand and Munshi Har Sukh Rai; both of them indulged in journalistic skirmishes. Munshi Diwan Chand tried to seduce the subscribers of Munshi Har Sukh Rai to his side when the latter was in prison. One such subscriber wrote in the *Koh-e-Nur* dated 29 April 1856: "A newspaper known as *Khurshid-e-Alam* reached me. It purports to be a substitute for *Koh-e-Nur* which has been adversely affected by the prison sentence to Munshi Har Sukh Rai." The *Koh-e-Nur* itself editorially commented: "Munshi Diwan Chand sent to all the subscribers of the *Koh-e-Nur* copies of a third-rate, non-sensical and mindless newspaper known as *Khurshid-e-Alam* asking them not to buy *Koh-e-Nur*, but to buy it instead."

Maulana Ahsan Marehravi has copied certain news items from *Khurshid-e-Alam* (Vol. I, No. 11, 16 May 1856) in his book *A History of Urdu Prose*. Calculating the date of the first issue from the details given in this issue, it can safely be asserted that this weekly newspaper was first issued on 7 March

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1856. Thus the date suggested by Siddiqui—1850—is entirely wrong.

Siddiqui's source of information in connection with *Khurshid-e-Alam* is *Akhtar-Shahenshahi* but, it appears, he has committed an error in copying information from his source. The actual passage in *Akhtar Shahenshahi* is as follows:

> 522. *Khurshid-e-Alam*, Sialkot; weekly; six sheets average; Tuesday; annual subscription: Rs. 12; owner: Diwan Chand; from Matba'-e-Chashmah-e-Faiz; 1 July 1852. (*Akhtar Shahenshahi*, p. 108).

Siddiqui has thus made interesting and surprising errors about the Punjab newspapers. Here is another of his revelation:

Victoria Paper

It was a weekly newspaper from Sialkot. Its owner and editor was Rai Diwan Chand. This newspaper is worthy of mention only because it had a long life. It was first issued in 1853. According to Kaifi, Munshi Gian Chand, the son of Rai Diwan Chand, became the editor after his father's death. This newspaper was in circulation till 1925.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has made a reference to the *Victoria Paper* of Sialkot which was, according to him, first issued in 1880. It was a daily, and its editor was Brij Lal. Now, the possibility of two newspapers with the same name being issued from one city is remote. (And this, when Siddiqui has already shown the possibility of a number of *Sadiq-al-Akhbars* being issued from Delhi.) From this it would appear that the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has actually referred only to the first *Victoria Papar*. Possibly, the original *Victoria Paper* changed from a weekly into a daily in 1880, and this might have led him to believe that there were two separate papers and that the latter was first issued in 1880.

It is necessary to quote Kaifi at length:

> In 1853 Diwan Chand Rais (Rai) Sialkot started a newspaper known as *Huma-e-Bebaha* from Matba'-*e-Chashmah-e-Faiz*.

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This paper is still struggling to survive under the name of *Victoria Paper*.

In the same article Kaifi has referred to the *Huma-e-Bebaha* at another place:

> *Huma-e-Bebaha* was issued from Matba'-e-*Chashmah-e-Faiz*, Lahore. It was a fortnightly. From the point of view of contents it was more of a periodical than a newspaper. There used to be articles on arts and sciences in it. In this respect it was like *Fawaid-al-Nazerin*. Besides, there used to be government circulars and orders in it.

From the above statements by Kaifi it can be concluded that Munshi Diwan Chand had issued a newspaper or periodical known as *Huma-e-Bebaha* from Matba'-e-*Chashmah-e-Faiz*, Lahore, in 1853. It is also stated in the above passages that the same *Huma-e-Bebaha* was converted into *Victoria Paper* later, and that remained in circulation till the first quarter of the present century. These suggestions, however, are not correct. *Huma-e-Bebaha* was certainly issued in 1853 from Lahore but it was not converted into Victoria Paper. That was a different paper issued by Diwan Chand from Sialkot after the upheaval of 1857. Natrajan also confirms the issue of *Huma-e-Bebaha* in 1853. He writes:

> Among the other papers which began publication during the period may be mentioned the *Huma-e-Bahar* (sic) of Munshi Diwan Chand from Lahore.[1]

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* writes:

> 1500. *Huma-e-Bebaha*, Lahore; twice a month on the 1st and 15th; 14 small-size sheets; owner: Munshi Diwan Chand; from Matba-e-Chashmah-e-Faiz; issued on 1 January 1853.

The *Huma-e-Bebaha* referred to by Kaifi is the same as has been mentioned in the official report for 1853-54. This periodical had certainly been issued from Lahore in 1853. Munshi Har Sukh Rai, however, has not referred to it though in *Koh-e-Nur* dated 16 January 1855 he has given a detailed account of the Punjab newspapers and presses. (The passage has already

1. Natrajan, *ibid.*, p. 54.

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been quoted earlier.) It is an interesting fact that Munshi Har Sukh Rai should not have referred to either Matba'-e-Chashma-e-Faiz or the periodical *Huma-e-Bebaha* though he has mentioned the other newspaper edited by Munshi Diwan Chand—the newspaper *Chashmah-e-Faiz* of Sialkot. The official report, on the other hand, refers to *Huma-e-Bebaha* but not Matba'-e-*Chashmah-e-Faiz*. Besides, the various issues of *Koh-e-Nur* from 1854 to 1856 give no evidence of the existence of *Huma-e-Bebaha* though in almost every issue of the newspaper there are reprintings of news from other newspapers. There are no quotations at all from *Huma-e-Bebaha*.

In this connection it is necessary to refer to the rivalry between Munshi Har Sukh Rai and Rai Diwan Chand. The *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 18 April 1858 would indicate that the first salvo was fired not by Munshi Har Sukh Rai but Rai Diwan Chand.

> We often hear and sometimes see that Lala Diwan Chand Sahib, manager *Chashmah-e-Faiz* starts provoking ordinary, simple people without much reason. And so far as the Editor of *Koh-e-Nur* is concerned he says anything he likes about him. Well, most people, high and low, tolerate his provocative remarks. He calls his newspaper *Chashmah-e-Faiz* but is it really a Chashma-e-Faiz—a stream of welfare? Getting angry and frothing at the mouth are not without reason. Let it be clear that the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* has nothing to do with him. Why should he indulge in controversies with him? So far as I am concerned he is no more than a stray bitch whose union with a stray dog has resulted in a litter of puppies: the bitch has not lost its old dirty habit of barking at passersby. In the end, however, it will eat its own head.

That journalistic rivalries came down to personal invective and mutual abuse is again borne out from the following passage in *Koh-e-Nur*:

> The pleasantly blooming, truthful newspaper No. 7 dated 28 May, arrived here from Peshawar. Going through its pages I found an article on p. 84 about the exchange of invectives among the editor newspapers in the Punjab. I

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then realized that the idea of peace and sympathy among newspaper editors is excellent. Mutual peace is good for all. Gentlemen—have you not heard the Persian couplet:

When an evil habit gets ingrained in the temperament,
It does not go away except at the moment of death.

Now, see what harm has the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* done to anyone that certain journalists have become like the sting of a scorpion to him. The editor of *Riaz-e-Nur* had inherited his hostility towards me from the editor of *Darya-e-Nur* —the darya soon dried up. Though the *darya* (river) of *Darya-e-Nur* had flowed down to Multan from Sialkot, the animus that its editor bore towards me still continued there. In the last resort it all came to abuse. The son of the editor of *Koh-e-Nur*, thinking that throwing a stone in the filthy water of controversy is futile, kept silent. He would not indulge in mutual slander. The result however was that at his (the editor's) back this unholy and filthy urchin, *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, was born. The child followed in the footsteps of the father, that is, it started writing against the *Koh-e-Nur* whatever came into its head out of envy and malice. The silence of the *Koh-e-Nur* was construed as weakness. The Editor of *Koh-e-Nur* remained silent for long and made no replies. At last his patience was exhausted; patience is possible only upto a certain extent. So, something was written from our side too, once or twice, That naturally provoked him, and also unnerved him. We again kept silent and let him bark and bark.

The opinion of the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* has always been that withdrawal is better than confrontation. The problem, however, is that this withdrawal is misunderstood to be acceptance of defeat. The real remedy for an impertinent person like him is to regard him as an excited dog. Keep quiet as long as it barks. Give a good thrashing again when it stops barking. The end would come to it as it is exhausted by barking . . . . Now tell me, is there a better cure for this ailment. The wise shall easily understand that

The *lala* grows in the garden, but in a waste land only thorns.

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The rivalry between Munshi Har Sukh Rai and Rai Diwan Chand is an unfortunate chapter in the history of Urdu journalism. Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid too has written something interesting on the subject. He has given a few more details:

> This misfortune of *Koh-e-Nur* (the imprisonment of Munshi Har Sukh Rai) was desired to be exploited by *Chashmah-e-Faiz*. How it wanted to do it can be learnt by knowing a little of its background. There was a gentleman, Munshi Diwan Chand, who had brought out three papers: 1. *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, a weekly; 2. *Khurshid-e-Alam*, a fortnightly; and 3. *Nurun-ala-Nur*, a monthly literary magazine.
>
> Munshi Har Sukh Rai, on the other hand, was the editor of two newspapers: 1. *Koh-e-Nur* and 2. *Khurshid-e-Punjab*, a monthly literary magazine.
>
> *Chashmah-e-Faiz* used to point out and ridicule errors in *Koh-e-Nur*. In retaliation a correspondent counted sixty errors of grammar and spelling in one issue of *Chashmah-e-Faiz*. He regretted why Munshi Har Sukh Rai also had been made the target of criticism. The correspondent further wrote: "We give you a friendly advice. This behaviour is not becoming of a gentleman. You are hitting at a fallen adversary. When Munshiji had not been imprisoned you were so afraid of him that you did not even wag your tail, what to say of sarcasm and irony. Sahib, you should speak to a gentleman like another gentleman; don't descend to the level of boors. In the end I would like to be excused for my forthrightness.
>
> (*Koh-e-Nur*, 6 May 1856)

Although the relations between Munshi Har Sukh Rai and Rai Diwan Chand were very bad, and Munshi Har Sukh Rai never tired of talking about *Chashmah-e-Faiz* of Rai Diwan Chand, it is strange that he never for once refers to *Huma-e-Bebaha*. Nor does he refer to Matba'-Chasmah-e-Faiz even once. It is natural that a newspaper started in 1853 should have been mentioned but, as we have just said, Munshiji never does it. The detailed account of the rivalry between Rai Diwan Chand and Munshi Har Sukh Rai has been given above only

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to highlight the relationship between these two stalwarts of journalism in the Punjab.

Kaifi has quoted the following passage from *Huma-e-Bebaha*, dated 28 February 1858 but without indicating his source:

What is Magnet?

> Let Providence be thanked a thousand times that the Earth has been replenished with a multitude of blessings for our well-being. The Earth is full of blessings both inside and outside. The more we think about it, the more of a miracle it appears. Look at the soil—what precious elements are mixed in it. Every particle of earth reflects His light. What is needed is a discerning eye, otherwise for the ignorant there is no difference between a jewel and a clod.

The date of the issue from which the quotation is given is 28 February 1858; this would indicate that the *Huma-e-Bebaha* was very much in circulation in that year.

Some information regarding the newspapers owned by Munshi Diwan Chand may be gathered from the following passage taken from the Persian-language newspaper *Mufarrah-al-Qulub*, Karachi:

> This week we received two issues of a newspaper known as *Khairkhwah-e-Punjab* (Nos. 3 and 4, dated 16 and 19 September 1856) in exchange for our newspaper. We got much pleasure by reading them. This newspaper . . . . is published from Sialkot in Punjab . . . by Munshi Diwan Chand who was the editor of *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, *Punjab journal* and *Khurshid-e-Alam* before the Mutiny of 1857. He used to manage these papers with great excellence . . . .

The above quotation tells us about the newspaper *Punjab Journal* also. Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid tells us that this newspaper was published not from Sialkot but from Lahore. It certainly was in circulation in 1856. Dr. Khurshid refers to the following Punjab newspapers on the basis of information in *Koh-e-Nur* from January to June 1856:

1. *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore,
2. *Lahore Gazette*,

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3. *Punjab Journal,*
4. *Khurshid-e-Punjab.*

The *Koh-e-Nur* (1855) reveals that *Punjab Journal* was in circulation in 1855 also. There is a news from the *Punjab Journal* in the *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 4 September 1855:

> The *Punjab Journal* writes that many residents of Kohat have left their homes and migrated to Rawalpindi as the epidemic of measles has spread there. The mountain tribals have reverted to their original profession—murder and loot.

The official report indicates that only two newspapers were in circulation at Lahore in 1857:

> Censor was easily imposed on Punjab newspapers. At Peshawar, the *Murtazai* was closed down and the editor was put behind the bars for writing seditious articles. Similarly the publication of the native newspaper of Multan was also stopped. The editor of *Chashmah-e-Faiz* was asked to shift his newspapers from Sialkot to Lahore. The newspapers from the Capital (Lahore), including the newly-shifted *Chashmah-e-Faiz,* were strictly censored and controlled.

The *Sahr-e-Samari* (Lucknow) for 1856-57 has quotations from the following newspapers of Punjab:

1. *Chashmah-e-Faiz,* Sialkot,
2. *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore,
3. *Punjabi*, Lahore,
4. *Shu'a'-al Shams*, Multan.

A glance through the *Sahr-e-Samari* (1857) reveals that in that year the two Lahore papers (referred to in the official report quoted above) were the *Koh-e-Nur* and *Punjabi Akhbar.* This would indirectly suggest that the *Huma-e-Bebaha* and *Punjab Journal* were not in circulation in the year of the Mutiny.

To sum up, Munshi Diwan Chand issued *Chashmah-e-Faiz* from Sialkot in 1853. It certainly was in circulation till 1857 and was shifted to Lahore in accordance with government order. There, however, it could not continue and was closed down. Besides, in 1856, at the time when Munshi Har Sukh

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Rai was in prison, Munshi Diwan Chand started another newspaper by the name of *Khurshid-e-Alam* on 7 March 1856 and sent copies of it to the subscribers of the *Koh-e-Nur*, in the hope that they would switch over to his newspaper instead of the *Koh-e-Nur*. This paper was certainly published as a weekly till 16 May 1856. Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid, however, regards it as a fortnightly. If so, it might have become a weekly after 16 May 1856.

Munshi Diwan Chand also issued a monthly from Matba'-e-Chashmah-e-Faiz, Sialkot. It was known as *Nurun-ala-Nur*, and it was certainly in circulation in 1856.

Dr. Abdussalam Khurshid has referred to the following Sialkot papers in 1856:

1. *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, weekly.
2. *Kuurshid-e-Alam*, fortnightly
3. *Nurun-ala-Nur*, monthly literary magazine.

The existence of the last-named is also confirmed by the another of *Akhtar Shahenshahi*:

> *Nurun-ala-Nur* Sialkot, monthly; 25 small-sized sheets; Rs. 12 annually; owner: Munshi Diwan Chand; from Matba'-e-Chashmah-e-Faiz, Sialkot; first issued on 30 January 1856.

Apart from these newspapers and journals from Sialkot Munshi Diwan Chand issued two papers from Lahore also: *Huma-e-Bebaha* (issued in 1853) and *Punjab Journal* (1855-56) It is not known where these two papers were printed at Lahore since the name of the Lahore Matba' was not known.

As has already been pointed out the *Chashmah-e-Faiz* was shifted to Lahore during the eventful days of 1857. Soon after this, it closed down. Munshi Diwan Chand did not have the courage to start a paper till 1865. When he did actually do so, he could not do it alone but in partnership with Seth Adarji Ghazi and Munshi Husain Bakhsh.

When in 1865 Munshi Diwan Chand started his paper *Khairkhwah-e-Punjab*, he also changed the name of his Matba'. He now named it after the name of the Financial Commissioner of Punjab, Mr. McLeod. The press was now known as the McLeod Press. The paper could not continue for long at

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Sialkot and had to be shifted to Gujranwala. Another paper, called *Rifah-e-'Am*, was started from Sialkot in 1876. The paper remained in circulation under this name but at the time of the jubilee of Queen Victoria, its name was changed to *Victoria Paper*. The Press too came to be known as the Victoria Press.

The defeat of the Sikhs had thoroughly demoralised the people of Punjab. They did not now have the courage to offer any resistance to the British. They adopted loyalty to the British as their permanent policy after the devastating defeat of 1849. During the great events of 1857 while the greater part of the people of India were ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of national freedom, the people of Punjab were staunchly supporting their foreign rulers against the native armies. An unexpected and unusual defeat had made them cowardly. It was for this reason that during the years before the Mutiny, the newspapers of the Punjab played the role of loyal sympathisers of the Company government. They were greatly hostile to native rulers in different parts of the country. The *Chashmah-e-Faiz* of Munshi Diwan Chand was no exception to this rule. Here is an extract from *Chashmah-e-Faiz* entitled "China."

> In old books the story of the hostility between the Emperor of China and the Company government is amply recorded ...Now we have the latest story. The Emperor of China, with a Chinese frown on his face, has issued the following proclamation: "The English "nation" would often enter our country and wound and kill our people. Out of our large-heartedness and nobility of mind we did not pay attention to such minor and trivial things. We have now found this "nation" to be headstrong and vain. Orders therefore had to be given by us to the soldiers and common people that any Englishman entering our land by crossing the seas may be forcefully deprived of his belongings. In case he offers resistance he may without hesitation be attacked by our armed forces. Any Chinese citizen bringing the head of an Englishman after cutting it shall get an award of 30 dollars in Chinese currency. No one should have fear of our punishment for shedding the blood of an Englishman. The

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Chinese citizens should take this injunction as a duty which may not be disregarded."

We were greatly surprised to hear of this proclamation. How stupid these people are! They do not know that the glory of the English people is eternal. Such is their wisdom and speech and military prowess that they can create a stir in less than a moment. They can push back the enemy, make it run for its life in no time...

The attitude of Munshi Diwan Chand towards native rulers may be assessed from the following:

Maharajah of Gwalior

The praiseworthy Maharajah has gone to Calcutta to save his Kingdom from being confiscated. He might get his heart's wish satisfied after his meeting with Nawab Governor General Bahadur. Now, if the confiscation orders have already been issued, then his journey would be futile. His journey would be fruitless even if he goes to the god Brahma...

Here is another prose ode in praise of the Company government Bahadur:

English Jurisdiction

This is the *amaldari* (area of jurisdiction) where the stream of well-being flows. "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world" is true only of this region. The garments of fair-play and justice were cut according to its shape; the achievements of this present age would not have entered even the dreams of the monarchs of old: the roads of iron, the journeys by the steam engine, telegraphy, equality before law. Who ever saw such things? Never did such things come to pass.

Here is a passage in a lighter vein:

What will be the result of the great changes that have been brought about in the country—the schools and colleges in every village and every town, the plans for the education of the most ignorant and the illiterate. Within twenty years you shall see that there will be no uneducated person even

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among the most ordinary. There shall not be a single idle person due to education and hard work. The English language will become so widespread that even the drivers of donkeys will cry in English "To one side," "To one side." Persian will also prosper: the carter will cry in Persian "Berau," "Berau." Arabic will be so exalted that everyone shall write "platon."

Akhbar Murtazai, Peshawar

This is the first newspaper to be issued from Peshawar. It was first published on 16 April 1854. A weekly, it was published every Monday on twelve average size pages. Its owner and editor, Haji Ali Karam Sahib, was a sophisticated, cultured and balanced person. It was for this reason that his newspaper was totally free from controversies and was always respected by everyone.

In *Akhtar Shahenshahi* we have the following account: "*Murtazai*, a Peshawar newspaper; first issued: October 1855." This statement is not correct. The Matba' and the newspaper both were in existence in 1854. About the establishment of the Matba' we have the following passage from *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 11 April 1854.

News about the Establishment of a Modern Press

There is a news that a modern press known as Gulzar-e-Punjab has been established at Shri Amritsarji by an old gentleman Rakhey Singh, and another press by the name of Matba'-e-Murtazai has been founded at Peshawar by Haji Ali Karam Sahib...

The *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 6 June 1854 gives us some useful information about *Akhbar Murtazai*:

The newly-blooming, truthful newspaper, dated 28 May (No. 7) reached us. After scrutiny we found on page 84 an article about controversies and rivalries among Punjab newspapermen. The advantages of peace and friendship are many. Peace is all-advantageous; hatred is all-harmful...

A perusal of other issues of *Koh-e-Nur* reveals that "the newsly blooming, truthful" newspaper referred to above is

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Akhbar Murtazai which was first issued in April 1854. Calculating on the basis of the above reference it can be safely asserted that *Akhbar Murtazai* was first issued on 16 April 1854. The seventh issue (see above) was printed on 28th May, 1854.

The *Koh-e-Nur* reprinted many news items from *Akhbar Murtazai*. We will, however, content ourselves only with two news items:

News from Peshawar

> The news from Peshawar is that these days the weather is very hot there. Thefts too have become very common. Not a week passes that a theft is not reported. The police do their best but the incidence of theft remains high.
>
> (*Koh-e-Nur*, 19 September 1854)

News from Peshawar

> The editor of the Peshawar newspaper writes that it rained heavily there. Heat has now subsided. Diseases have spread. The whites are terribly upset. On the 4th of July as it rained heavily at night three prisoners—Malik Anwar Khan serving a term of five years, and two others serving fourteen year terms each—jumped out of the prison walls. A hue and cry was raised; the *darogha* and other officials did their best to catch the escapees but the latter were nowhere to be found. The jail superintendent Farzand Hasan, a *jamadar* and four warders are being interrogated.
>
> The Prince of Kokan is still in Peshawar. He intends to leave for home soon. The editor of the Peshawar newspaper advises him not to go via Kabul. The aim of this advice is not clear.
>
> (*Koh-e-Nur*, 24 July 1855)

Akhbar Murtazai seems to be a little different from its contemporaries, specially those of the Punjab. Apart from its non-controversial nature, its moderation in style and news content is its most prominent feature. Realism and truthfulness as well as sincerity characterize its expression. *Murtazai* appears to be patently sympathetic towards the native rulers though its loyalty to the Company government too is beyond doubt. However, it is quite critical of the government's injustice and

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tyranny though such criticism is presented in fair language. There are a number of news items quoted from *Akhbar Murtazai* in the *Sehr-e-Samari* of Lucknow. We shall give here only one such item which may serve to indicate its general quality:

London

The scriptures of news (newspapers) bring the tidings with a reference to writings appearing in London; the truth-encompassed contents are patent letter by letter: that the submission made by the King of Oudh was heard at the First Stage. Then, in accordance with regulations, it passed, through the Second and the Third Stages. However, only gradually did the colour of the Flower of Intent become visible. Now, is the Court of the Parliament open; the scales of Justice are ready to weigh the truth. The Company government of the English Bahadur are greatly worried; night and day consultations are going on. The worry is lest the heirs of the King, the Protector of Angels, might complain of injustice, might bring the truth of their loyalty to light. (The Company government wants) them to accept as much compensation as they desire but make no claim to the territories of Oudh—and this is not acceptable to them. Say these heirs: let the country go or remain, what is important is the Word of Honour earlier given by the Company. Justice is what they want; obedient to the law of the court they are. When the Officers of the Parliament scrutinize this case, when they learn the truth about it from the beginning to the end, then shall the crime be exposed. If patience bears fruit and endurance has any effect then shall Justice be done. Shaikh Sa'di says:

Do not be bitter and unhappy at the Revolution of
Days because Patience
Though bitter bears yet a sweet Fruit.

The Parliament is a house of Justice; there partiality is in disfavour. Every question is discussed openly. Sure it is that Justice shall be given to the heirs of the King with the Glory of Jamshed. The Real Gardener shall make the Branch of Hope to bloom.

(*Sehr-e-Samari*, 2 March 1857)

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This muted criticism of the Company government and its policies became harsh and severe as rebellion broke out in different parts of the country. Such criticism, however, did not augur well for the paper. The authorities suppressed all dissent. What happened to *Akhbar Murtazai* may be learnt from the official report which may once again be quoted: "Strict censor was easily imposed on the Punjab newspapers, and at Peshawar the editor of *Murtazai* was put behind bars and his paper closed down for writing seditious articles." Thus was *Murtazai* closed down for ever.

Malta'-al-Anwar, Gujrat (Punjab):

Akhtar Shahenshahi makes the following statement about this newspaper: "Matla'-al-Anwar, a Gujrat newspaper: first issued May 1853." It is difficult to ascertain the exact date of the first issue under the present circumstances. It can, however, be asserted that it did exist in 1854. Munshi Har Sukh Rai has included *Matla'-al-Anwar* among newspapers from Punjab. His actual words have already been quoted. Like other Punjab newspapers, the *Matla'-al-Anwar* too was a victim of controversies among journalists. A study of different issues of the *Koh-e-Nur* throws light on the style and news content of *Matla'-al-Anwar*; it also throws light on the many controversies it entered into with other contemporaries.

News from Jammu

The editor of the newspaper at Gujrat writes that the bombardment at the fort of Singhal Devi continued till the 15th. Not much harm to the fort was done. On the 25th also a lot of ammunition was used against the fort but to no avail. Now there is silence on both sides. The armies of the Maharaja which were earlier close to the fort have now withdrawn two miles away from Morchal in accordance with the Maharaja's orders. It is not clear why they had to do so.

The newspaper (from Gujrat) also writes that on the 9th of Baisakh (19 April) the army of the Maharaja made a surprise attack on the stable of horses belonging to Raja Sahib Jawahar Singh but the *qiledars* made a fitting reply.

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> Four horses and about a hundred men were killed. The rest ran away. Moreover, the besieged in the fort of Amrit Garh successfully looted forty ponies carrying flour for the Maharaja's army. Sixty Rohilla soldiers of Maharaja Sahib were camping in front of the fort. Charat Singh, thanedar in the army of Raja Jawahar Singh came out with fifty or sixty men, killed the Rohillas and went back into the fort. Only God knows what the result will be of these skirmishes.

Having copied the above news, the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* had the following to say about the controversy between *Matla'-al-Anwar* and *Chashmah-e-Faiz*. He found an analogy between this controversy and the war between the Maharajah and Raja Jawahar Singh: the result of the controversy would decide the fate of the fighting. "The editor of *Chashmah-e-Faiz* should be regarded as the Maharajah, and the editor of *Matla'-al-Anwar* should be thought of as Raja Sahib. It is highly regrettable that while actual fighting goes on between the Maharajah and the Rajah, there should be so much bad blood between these newspapermen. We would request these gentlemen to fight to the finish so that we may learn the result of the other, real flghting."

The use of abusive language was not reserved only for each other by journalists; everyone, great or small, native and foreigner, came to be its target. The editor of *Matla'-al-Anwar* was not the only culprit; the doyen of journalists in the Punjab, the leader of the caravan, the great commander, Munshi Sukh Rai himself was as much of a culprit in this respect as anyone else. The following news relates to a suit filed against the editor of *Matla'-al-Anwar*:

> The suit filed against the editor of *Matla'-al-Anwar* by the *Sarrishtadari* of the Jehlum *commissionary* in the criminal court concerning use of abusive language and libel has been dismissed by Mr. Forbes, Sahib Bahadur Deputy Commissioner of Gujrat. The editor of the Gujrat newspaper promises to publish his own written statement in the next issue of the newspaper. We promise our readers to reprint the same in our paper too.

Here is the news about such a case against the editor of *Koh-e-Nur* himself:

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The libel suit by Munshi Umar Daraz Ali and Saiyyid Mahfooz Husain against the editor of the *Koh-e-Nur* in the court of Mr. Bippin Sahib, Extra Assistant Commissioner, has this week been adjudicated. Appeal in the higher court shall now be filed. There was not space enough in this paper to give details of the case so they have been reserved for another issue.

Like other contemporary newspapers, the *Matla'-al-Anwar* too concentrated on local news. Such reporting was generally truthful and exact. Here is one specimen:

The Gujrat paper informs that these days there is an increase in the incidence of crime. It is probable that something is wrong with the police "bandobast." The paper writes that three passengers came to stay in an inn. Two of them killed the third one and disappeared. They threw the dead body in a pond. The two who disappeared must have been *thugs*; they might have accompanied the third one on the way. Finding an opportune moment they murdered him and ran away with his belongings. Similarly, another *thug* gave poison to two water-carriers, and when the latter became unconscious looted away their belongings.

Nayyar-e-A'zam, Batala (Gurdaspur):

Another newspaper, *Nayyar-e-A'zam*, was issued from Punjab towards the close of 1854. It was first published by Mufti Muhammad Bakhsh on 22 December 1854. There is a news about its first issue in *Koh-e-Nur*, dated 26 December 1854.

On the receipt of an advertisement and a copy of the newspaper (No. 1, Dated 22 December 1854) it became apparent that on the horizon of Vatala (Batala) a newspaper called *Nayyar-e-A'zam* has risen under the management of Mufti Muhammad Bakhsh Sahib, printer. The ink of the printing soothed the eyes, and the name of the newspaper pleased the heart. May the kind God give it long life and increase its prestige. We should be thankful that the means of spreading knowledge are increasing in Punjab.

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There is a reference to the *Nayyar-e-A'zam* in the *Akhtar Shahenshahi*, but the date of the first issue given therein is not correct. The reference reads: "1450. *Nayyar-e-A'zam*, Batala; a Punjab newspaper; first issued: 1855." The reference in the *Koh-e-Nur* (given above) decides the matter of the date; it was 1854, and not 1855.

Mufarrah-al-Qulub, Karachi (Sindh)

Only one Persian-language newspaper, *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* can be traced at Karachi before the upheaval of 1857. An incomplete file containing issues published between 1282-83 A.H. has been preserved at the library of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Hind (Aligarh). This newspaper was issued by Munshi Mirza Mukhlis Ali and printed at Matba'-e-*Mufarrah-al-Qulub* under the supervision of Mirza Muhammad Shafi. The following is the print-line of the newspaper: "This newspaper was printed at *Matba'-e-Khurshid* and Matba'-e-*Mufarrah-al-Qulub* under the supervision of Mirza Muhammad Shafi on the request of the owner of the Matba', Janab Munshi Mirza Mukhlis Ali."

The paper was most probably first issued on 1 Muharram 1273 A.H. (3 September 1856). The first issue of volume 11, dated 18 May 1866, contains the following information: God be thanked that by His Grace and Kindness, and by the kindness of officers, and also by the assistance received from the subscribers, the tenth volume of this newspaper has come to an end. From the beginning of the month of Muharram 1282 A.H., the eleventh year of publication starts.

The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* refers to *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* in the following words:

> Karachi, Port of Sindh, weekly; eight sheets average; Registered No. 6; issued by Mirza Muhammad Shafi Ithna Ashri; editor: Mirza Muhammad Ja'far, Ithna Ashri; this is a Persian-language newspaper; printed at Matba'e-Malt-e-Khurshid; first issued: 1856.

This was a weekly newspaper printed on 30×19 cm. size 16 pages. There used to be two columns on each page and twenty lines in each column. The colour of the paper was sometimes white, sometimes yellow and sometimes green. The calligraphy

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used to be beautiful; the language was simple and fluent. The word "Al-'Ali" was inserted in the middle of the mast-head. Exactly below it were the words "Karachi Bunder Sindh," and in the next line the words "Matla'-e-Khurshid Mufarrah-al-Qulub." There used to appear the following three verses round the matter on the mast-head:

The work I have started by trusting Thee
May be brought to success by Thee, O God.
The greenery that comes out of the earth
Opens its tongue (to prove) Thy Oneness.
O Thou whose Name is the content of my soul,
The endless Capital of happiness.

In the last line of the mast-head were given the volume number, the issue number and the date in both the Hirji and the Christian calendars. The subscription rates were given in another box: Annual, Rs. 10; six-monthly, Rs. 5-8 as.; monthly, Re. 1.

It is difficult to say anything with certainly about the style and news-content of *Mafarrah-al-Qulub* before 1857 since none of the issues of the newspaper is extant. This is true not only of this newspaper but also of most others. In the case of *Mafarrah-al-Qulub* we can only rely on the later incomplete file. There is a news about the Sultan of Oudh in *Mafarrah-al-Qulub*, dated 29 June 1866. It begins with a didactic Persian couplet:

There is no trusting the bird of Glory;
This pigeon always seeks to perch on a different wall.

It goes on to point out that an application has been moved on behalf of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah before the British Parliament claiming a certain amount due to him out of his personal allowance. The news is well-written in the context of the universal theme of the vanity of the world and the fickle nature of fortune.

Mirza Muhammad Shafi' was a man of moderation. This personal trait is reflected in qualities of style—balance and smoothness. His attitude towards the Company government was one of loyalty. He was equally sympathetic towards native rulers. This general sympathy and moderation lend an engaging

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quality to his style. He did not enter into controversies with his contemporaries. He was a careful editor and was conscious of the need for complete reference while quoting news from other newspapers. This scholarly fastidiousness is of immense help now. Out of the pages of *Mufarrah-al-Qulub*, we can now gather not only the names of other contemporary newspapers but also exact details (Issue and Volume numbers and dates) of publication of particular issues. It reflects not only moral qualities of character—integrity and honesty—but also an intellectual awareness of the modern methods and tools of scholarship. Among his other virtues may be counted the large-hearted welcome he always extended to the new-comers in the field of journalism. Two passages may be cited in order to highlight this last-mentioned quality:

> This week was received . . . a newspaper by the name of *Darya-e-Latafat* (Volume I, No 1. dated 4 April 1866), published from Kanpur under the supervision of Janab Saiyyid Sakhawat Husain Sahib 'Utarid', the Home of all Greatness, the Leader of Wits, the Pride of the Poets of the World, the Beauty of the *Diwan* of Pure Speech, etc. etc.

The series of epithets appended to the name of Janab Sakhawat Husain Sahib were purely conventional, an act of courtesy; they meant little then as they do now. Here is another welcome, this time to the *Khairkhwah-e-Punjab*:

> This week . . . two issues of a newspaper known as *Khair-khwah-e-Punjab* (Nos. 3 and 4, dated 16 and 19 September 1865) and printed at McLoed Press, Sialkot, arrived here in exchange for *Mufarrah-al-Qulub*. A study of the contents of these issues gave us great pleasure. This newspaper . . . is published from Sialkot in the Punjab under the able supervision of Munshi Diwan Chand Sahib who, before the outbreak of the Mutiny, used to edit and publish the *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, *Punjab Journal* and *Khurshid-e-Alam* . . .

A new age in the history of journalism starts after 1857. Innumerable newspapers then came into existence, and the number of printing presses too greatly increased. There is in *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* an interesting news about the large number of printing presses at Lahore:

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The *Koh-e-Nur* writes that sixteen printing presses are working at present at Lahore. Another press is going to start work near Lahouri Mandi. The editor of *Koh-e-Nur* goes on to say that if the number of printing presses goes on increasing in this manner, Lahore would soon come to occupy the pride of place in this respect among all other Indian cities.

The *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* published not only national news but also news about other countries, specially Islamic countries. Generally, these news were borrowed from other newspapers. Occasionally, they were based on correspondents' letters. Here is a specimen of the news published in *Mufarrah-al-Qulub*:

The editor of *Kanpur Gazette* writes that these days Sardar Islam Khan and Sardar Muhammad Husain Khan, belonging to the royal family of Kabul, have come away from there and entered the British *amaldari* in India which has in fact become a shelter and a place of refuge for victims of tyranny. The government of Punjab has made suitable arrangements for them.

The *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* took an intelligent interest in the administrative problems of the country and kept its readers well-posted about them:

In the *Kanpur Gazette* it is written that there is a proposal before the Government of India that the post of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh be abolished. The districts (of Oudh) which are close to Agra may be merged with the North-Western Provinces, and those which are close to the Punjab may be given to the Punjab government. However, as long as the new Court remains at Agra, this proposal may not be implemented.

Though the *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* was a Persian newspaper, it occasionally published articles and poems in Urdu too. There are two such articles in the issue dated 22 February 1866. Their titles are:

1. An Essay condemning Anger. . . by Mirza Shahabuddin Ahmad Khan Sahib Bahadur . . .
2. An Essay about reduction in expenditure on weddings by Muhammad Salim Sahib Jaipuri.

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There is an article entitled "Preservation of Health" in the issue dated 26 January 1866. It was borrowed from *Khairkhwah-e-Punjab*.

Apart from articles of a didactic kind, the *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* also published Persian *ghazals* and *qasidas*. Sometimes it also published lists of newly printed books. There is a news entitled "List of Books published by Matba'-e-Navalkishore" in the issue dated 17 August 1866:

> Thrice in the past we wrote in this newspaper that at the press of Munshi Naval Kishore Sahib books of all kinds are easily and abundantly available. Since a number of letters have been received from readers enquiring about these books and as it is not possible to reply to those letters individually, we are giving a list of all the books here below:

A scrutiny of the list indicates that the number of books published at the Naval Kishore press was quite large even in 1866. The list of law books alone, in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, runs into three issues. This shows the great popularity of Matba'-e-Naval Kishore.

The *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* published not only lists and catalogues of books but also detailed advertisements of particular works. There is a long advertisement, written in the conventional style of the day, of a verse translation of *Arabian Nights* which might be of interest to modern readers for its quaint flavour though in an English translation it loses not only its pleasant jingle of rhymes but also fanciful embroidering of simple and conventional ideas. The long advertisement (in Urdu) runs as follows:

Alf Lailah Versified

> Scarce, exceptional and select are the people in this age whose natures have experienced Pain, whose hearts are familiar with Love, who are fond of the pleasures of sweet Poesy and take interest in listening to tales and fables. True it is that consciouness comes by learning of the conditions of the Past; the curtain of Ignorance is thus removed from the mind and heart. Is it ever possible for the Men of Insight to be satiated with the Sight of books? Are men of

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wisdom ever too contented with tales and stories? There are stories, creations of poets, but this story of a thousand and one nights is pleasantly provocative of Love. Where else can anyone get a more interesting story? To the lovers, every night of this attractive Laila brings the delights of the night of meeting with the beloved. Every morning of this attractive Salma is an exegesis of the Surah 'wa-alshams.'' First it was printed and liked in the Arabic tongue. Then it was translated into English: the high and the low liked it. Next, it was put into Urdu prose which was praised by everyone...Wits and men of insight prefer the verse form of 'mathnavi.' Therefore, this humble man, Naval Kishore, the owner of Matba' *Avadh Akhbar*, asked the poets associated with the Matba' to raise an edifice of poetry in such a way as to make this attractive Mistress...beautified by verse. First of all...Janab Mirza Asghar Ali Khan tried his hand at it. The stories of the first two hundred and fifty nights were versified...The next five hundred nights were put into verse form by Munshi Tota Ram 'Shayan.' He had already made his mark by translating *Mahabharat* and *Dastan-e-Amir-Hamza* into Urdu verse. The remaining stories of the last two hundred and fifty nights were put into poetic form by Munshi Shadi Lal Chaman, the disciple of the late Mirza Nasim...

The extant issues of *Mufarrah-al-Qulub* contain references to the following contemporary newspapers:

Avadh Akhbar, Lucknow; *Khairkhwah-e-Punjab*, Sialkot; *Akhbar-e-'Alam*, Meerut; *Kanpur Gazette*, Kanpur; *Kashf-al-Akhbar*, Bombay; *Akhbar Muhtashim*, Jawarah; *Jam-e-Jehan Numa*, Calcutta; *Nayyar Rajasthan*, Jaipur; *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore; *Akhbar Kartan*, Madras; *Nur-e-Nazar*, Bulandshahar; *Shams-al-Akhbar*, Madras; *Sultan-al-Akhbar*, Calcutta; *Mazhar-al-Ajaib*; *Mazhar-al-Akhbar*; *Risala Alkhabar*; *Isha' at-e-Matalib-e-Mufida*, Punjab; *Chiragh-e-Delhi*, Delhi; *Darya-e-Latafat*, Kanpur; *Nayyar-e-A'zam*, Banglore; *Akhbar Mufid-al-Anam*; *Jalwa-e-Tur*, Meerut; *Meerut Gazette*, Meerut; *Barq-e-Khatif*, Bombay; *Latif-al-Akhbar*, Bombay; *Star of India*, Gujranwala; *Suhail-e-Punjab*, Rawalpindi; *Akmal-al-Akhbar*, Delhi, etc.

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8

Lucknow Newspapers

A Survey of Newspapers at Lucknow before 1857

Although the publication of newspapers in north India had already started in 1837, there is no trace of a newspaper at Lucknow till 1847. The researches of Muhammad Atiq Siddiqui have led him to conclude that a certain newspaper, known as *Lucknow Akhbar*, was in circulation from Lucknow in the early part of 1847. He write:

> The first newspaper from Lucknow about whose existence we have any documentary evidence is the *Lucknow Akhbar*. However, we have no means of ascertaining the exact date of its first issue. It is nevertheless certain that a gentleman whose name was Lalji did publish the *Lucknow Akhbar* in the early part of 1847.
>
> A hand-written Register of Newspapers containing a record of 1847 newspapers is preserved in the National Archives. Pandit Jivan Rakhan Tiwari used to make enteries in this register regarding newspapers and periodicals and other related papers which were received at the "Daphtar Farasi Khana Governori" (the Persian office of the Governor) from Delhi, Agra, Bareilly, Simla and Calcutta. In this register, under the date 24 April 1847, we find Lalji's *Lucknow Akhbar* too, and this is positive evidence that on that date the said newspaper was in existence.

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A reference to *Qaiser-al-Tawarikh* by Kamaluddin Haider[1] reveals the fact that Lalji worked as Akhbar Nawis or Chronicler in the Company government. The *Lucknow Akhbar* was probably a hand-written newspaper which chronicled news of the local state for the benefit of the officers of the Company government.

Lalji must have worked his way up to the high post of Chronicler owing to his extensive knowledge, insight and ability to learn. He gained the confidence of the officers of the government. The following account of an incident in which he was involved throws light on the high esteem in which he was held by the Company government: the Assistant Resident used to live outside the city in Mandyavan cantonment for reasons of health. Lalji used to come to him every day for giving him news about the state. On the way to Mandyavan there was a garden which was one day visited by the Ladies of the Palace. Owing to *purdah* restrictions Lalji had to climb down from the carriage in which he was riding; he had to walk a certain distance on foot. He complained to General Sleeman about this insult. General Sleeman got angry and ordered Bashiruddaulah, who was responsible for the insult, to pay one thousand rupees to Lalji.[2]

No other paper was published from Lucknow after *Lucknow Akhbar* till 1856. The *As'ad-al-Akhbar*, Agra (1849) reveals the fact that in that year all the printing presses were closed down in Lucknow by royal orders. It was declared that anyone printing anything without royal permission would be regarded as an offender. There are no specific references to any newspapers being then published from Lucknow but the inference from the royal order banning all publications is that there were certain papers which had been closed down along with printing houses. It is not clear from the news in *As'ad-al-Akhbar* why these presses at Lucknow were closed down. Only the fact of the banning of newspapers etc. is certain but not the reason why such an order had to be issued. Whether any newspaper was published from the royal printing press (Matba'-e-Sultani) is not certain.

1. (Lucknow), 1886.
2. *Qaiser-al-Tawarikh*, Vol. 2, p. 39.

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A few months later orders were again issued permitting publication activity within certain limits. The restrictions were rather severe. The owners of printing presses were asked to shift their machines to certain royal premises. What to say of newspapers, even the publication of books without royal permission was banned. Every published book had to bear the seal of the Matba'-e-Sultani.

The news in the *As'ad-al-Akhbar* about the order against newspapers and printing houses is given below:

> These days all the printing presses at Lucknow have been closed down by royal orders. It is proclaimed that anyone printing anything either secretly or openly shall be regarded as an offender against the Sultan. This order has almost finished the owners of the printing presses. The editor of *Zubdat-al-Akhbar*, however, still believes this news to be incorrect and false.
>
> (*As'ad-al-Akhbar*, 17 September 1849)

As a certain doubt had been expressed at the end of the news item quoted above, another news was published in the issue dated 22 September 1849:

> The news about the closure of printing presses at Lucknow published last week has now been confirmed by a letter. It is written that the owners of printing presses are extremely concerned and dissatisfied. They wish to leave Lucknow and go to Kanpur. They are, however, afraid of going to Kanpur lest their machines be snatched away from them on the way to Kanpur under the pretext of the royal order. They are now trying to seek the protection of the Resident Bahadur to be able to reach Kanpur safely.

The sudden closure of the printing presses at Lucknow had caused many rumours to spread. Some people through the banning order had been withdrawn while others believed that the restrictions still continued. All the outside newspapers were eager to find out the truth. Why were the presses closed down? Only the publication of a book or two could not have led to such a drastic step. Had there appeared a book of history causing offence? The *As'ad-al-Akhbar* quoted the following from *Akhbar-al-Haqaiq*:

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First it was heard that the closed printing presses had again been opened. The *Bagh-o-Bahar* of Benaras now tells us that the news was false. The presses are still closed. On the first of Zil-Hij the post of *darogha* (superintendent) of the royal printing press was given to Mazahib Ali. The printing press of Haji Muhammad Husain was closed down. The new *darogha* called all the owners of printing presses and told them either to bring their machines to the royal building or to give guarantee that they would never use their presses for printing work.

(19 November 1849)

It is obvious that only the printing of books could not have roused the government's anger to such a pitch. It is quite possible that advertisements, contrary to the interests of the royal government were printed at any or some of the presses. The surprising thing is that though the closure of newspapers was widely reported, nobody thought of finding out or publishing the reasons for such an act. Whatever the reasons the fact is that the printing presses at Lucknow remained closed for many months and the owners of these presses were obliged to leave Lucknow for good. Haji Maulvi Muhammad Husain, for example, whose press was regarded as one of the best, had to bid farewell to Lucknow and establish himself anew at Kanpur. Haji Mustafa Khan, the owner of Matba'-e-Mustafai, too left Lucknow and established himself at Kanpur.

The circumstances at Kanpur were not very encouraging for printing presses, and so the owners were greatly upset. Thus, soon afterwards, some of them again returned to Lucknow, more so as the ban too had been lifted. Some of the restrictions were still there. The presses could function only under royal control, and every book had to bear the seal of the manager of Matba'-e-Sultani. Under such circumstances the printing of newspapers was very difficult. During the period 1850 to 1856 we find the following passage on every book printed at Lucknow: "By Order. The following seal. Matba'-e-Kathir-al-Munafe' known as Sultan-al-Matabe'. Under the supervision of Captain Maqbool-ud-daulah Bahadur Mirza Mehdi Ali Khan..." Thus during these years there was strict

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censorship on books. The subjects looked up to the Resident for redress rather than to the Sultan or his ministers.

Apart from censorship, the general condition of the people too was very bad. Throughout the region of Oudh there was violence, mainly communal, which was not sought to be suppressed by the Sultan's government. Selfishness, luxury, indifference to administrative problems and the tyrannical attitude of the subordinate staff were disturbing elements not only for the subjects but also the white patrons of the royal government. The luxurious life and womanising of Wajid Ali Shah, the Sultan of Oudh, had reached the peak. The newspapers throughout the length and breath of the country wrote about the worsening situation in Oudh. The condition of the subjects roused concern everywhere; horrifying tales of tyranny and oppression were narrated in newspapers, and these stories were accompanied by juicy tales of the Sultan's life of luxury and exotic pleasures.

The attitude of the Company government was characterised by ambiguity and hypocrisy. It made much of its concern for the welfare of the people and constantly issued public warnings to the Sultan and his government. The burden of its advice was: improve the condition; otherwise he prepared to bear the consequences. At last, on the 7th of February 1856 the orders for the deposition of the Sultan were issued. Part of the proclamation ran as follows; The agreement signed in 1801 promised full protection to the Sultan against internal and external aggression. The Sultan had, on the other hand, promised to look after the welfare of the subjects in the best possible manner. The promises made by the Company have been kept in letter and in spirit. No enemy of the Sultan has ever been allowed to cross into the territories of Oudh. The British army was always there to come to the aid of the Sultan.

The Sultan, on the other hand, never cared to keep his promise. Under the circumstances, the Company could have broken the agreement and withdrawn its support to the Sultan. However, it continued to honour the agreement in the larger interest of the common people. The Sultan had meanwhile been admonished several times, even by the Governor General himself. It was made clear to him that in case the agreement

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was disregarded by the Sultan, he would have to suffer the consequences. The friendly advice was not taken, either through indifference or perversity. Admonitions, show of resentment and threats, all fell on deaf ears. The main condition in the agreement was never fulfilled; the common people continued to groam under oppression and tyranny. "The whole country knows that the Sultan does not take any interest in administration; all his powers have been delegated to incompetent or tyrannical courtiers who please him through flattery. The royal army is in total disarray; the soldiers are not paid by the *bakhshis*, and so the former extort money from poor villagers. The entire country is infested with robbers and highwaymen; hardly any order exists anywhere. Violence has become endemic; life and property are not secure. The situation has grown so bad that the Company government can no longer be a silent spectator. Intervention has become essential because the alternative is total chaos and disorder. The Company government has chosen the former course. Hence, it is hereby proclaimed that the entire control of the state of Oudh vests now in the East India Company."

Whatever the truth in the claims made by the Company, the fact is that the common people of Oudh loved their Sultan and were greatly upset over his deposition. They regarded the rule of the Company government as totally against their interests. The newspapers published in the short period between the deposition and the rebellion were full of discussions regarding the causes and effects of the deposition. It was also pointed out that the condition of the rest of the country outside Lucknow was really bad.

The order about the deposition of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah and the annexation of Oudh was published on 7 February 1856. The Sultan humbly resigned himself to his fate without resistance and thus, at the same time, proved his loyalty to his British masters. His loyalty had also been mentioned in the Proclamation which shows that the charges against him were false and indicative of duplicity on the part of the Company: its main aim was to grab the country of Oudh since in terms of personal relations, the Company had nothing but praise for the Sultan. In any case the Sultan was helpless before the might

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of the British. He decided to go to Calcutta on his way to England where he hoped to present his case before Her Majesty, the Queen. There he wanted to expose the dishonesty, injustice and breach of promise of the Company. On reaching Calcutta, however, he was advised not to undertake the voyage to England on medical grounds. He, therefore, sent his mother and the heir apparent in the custody of Masihuddin Khan (who was his *Mukhtar-e-'Am* in England) to plead his case before the Queen.

It was after the painful event of the annexation of Oudh that freedom of expression became common at Lucknow. A number of newspapers began publication one after the other. The theme of most of the news for a long time was the misery and helplessness of the Sultan at the time of, and after, the deposition. The Sultan who had deliberately or unknowingly deprived the people of their rights became now an object of love and pity. They had now forgotten his weaknesses; instead, they now worked and prayed for his restoration. The right to freedom of expression, of which they had been deprived by the Sultan himself, was now being used in his favour. Plenty of news favouring the Sultan were printed in newspapers. The oppressive policies of the Company government and the injustice of its high officials were thoroughly exposed in the press. This was something new and unheard of, this spirit of freedom, that was percolating down to the common people through newspapers and must have been causing concern to the Company government.

Tilism-e-Lucknow, Lucknow

The age of newspapers dawned in Lucknow after the annexation of Oudh and the exile of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah. *Tilism-e-Lucknow* is the earliest among the newspapers that have been brought to light through research. The owner and editor of this newspaper was Maulvi Muhammad Yaqub Ansari, a close friend of the author Rajab Ali Beg 'Suroor' and a scion of the Firangi Mahal family. He was also the owner of a press known as Matba'-e-Muhammadi. It was closed down during the upheaval of 1857 and re-started later under the name of Matba'-e-Karnama Akhwar.

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Tilism-e-Lucknow was started on 25 July 1856 (22 Zi-Qa'd 1272 A.H.) from Matba'-e-Muhammadi. In its inner and outward qualities it is a perfect embodiment of the culture, sophistication and style of Lucknow. The title page was beautifully decorated; the words *Tilism-e-Lucknow* were boldly written in the middle, and the following verses printed around it:

O paper of news, be thankful to God
That thou hast infused new life into Lucknow.
A treasure of the jewels of meaning is in it;
Open your eyes on the Tilism (magic) of Lucknow.

This matter was contained in almost the whole of the upper half of the page. The middle part contained the number of the issue, date in Hijri and Christian Calendars, the day and the volume number. There was a change after No. 10, dated 26 September 1856: the upper part of the said line now contained two verses of *hamd* (hymn) and *na't* (panegyric for the Prophet):

At the head of the page is a hymn to God;
It is the decoration of the first page.
Then there is praise for the Leader of Men:
Who brought true gospel to us.

The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* used to be divided into two columns. The first half column of the title-page contained a rhymed advertisement of the newspaper which may be quoted below:

This newspaper is printed every Friday. Correctness of news is taken care of as far as possible. Praising or blaming is not our system though we never hesitate in telling the truth. The monthly subscription rate is Re. 1: six monthly, Rs. 8-8 as.; annual, Rs. 15. For those who do not pay in advance, the annual rate is Rs. 21. The subscribers may send in their money to Muhammad Yaqub at Matba'-e-Muhammadi. The newspaper will be despatched immediately after the receipt of the subscription money. Information may be sent before the despatch of the next issue if suspension of subscription is desired. Otherwise, the paper will continue to be despatched, and the subscriber will be obliged to pay.

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After the 15th issue, dated 31 October 1856, the following verse chronogram was added below the advertisement; the verses contain "taushikh", a figure of speech:

From the capital (has come out) the style of *Tilism-e-Lucknow*

A guarantee of perfection in Art and Science;
The world is wonder-struck at its form and content—
Wonderful its style deriving from words and meaning.
The year of its inauguration is (hidden) in the first two couplets.

The magical pen has come out of the heart.

The above stanza is found only in two issues. The issue dated 14 November 1856 contains another verse-chronogram which continued to be published in all the extant issues:

The Yusuf of meaning was born to Yaqub;
The Zulaikha of the world desired to see him.
The chronogrammatic verse of its opening was thus written:
"The jewel of meaning has become incarnate in the *Tilism* of Lucknow."

The last line of the above verses gives us the date of the first issue—1272 A.H.

The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* was first issued on 25 July 1856 and the last issue is dated 8 May 1857. The complete file of all these issues, with the only exception of the 37th, was preserved in the library of Firangi Mahal which has by good fortune been transferred to the History Department of Aligarh Muslim University. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* is not an ordinary newspaper but a complete historical document that gives us an insight into the background of events from the annexation of Oudh to the freedom struggle of 1857. Every word of these issues interprets for us the complex of feelings and ideas, specially of the people of Lucknow, during those eventful days. Every sentence is an elegy on the fall of Oudh; it tells us about the injustice done to Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Every page is a mirror that reflected the power, the glory as also the oppressive tyranny of the Company government. Another aspect of contemporary life portrayed in its pages is related to the economic aspect of contemporary society—unemployment, depression and crisis.

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The second column of the title-page contained local news under the heading "Lucknow." The very first issue gives us a picture of the misery and helplessness of the residents of Lucknow and the oppressive measures of the rulers:

> It would not be a paradox to say that since the time the English hospital has been established in the old storehouse, a new disease has spread in the houses nearby: every resident is sorrow-stricken that he is obliged to shift to some other place. The orders are that the houses of the subjects —both *kachcha* and *pukka*—be rased to the ground, and the pond that is close by be filled up and paved. On Friday, the first of Zi'qa'd 1272 A.H. (4 July 1856) the Barrack Master went there and ordered houses to be pulled down. He gave the people no time, paid no attention to their tearful pleas. At last, a few men and women, greatly upset, went to the Tari Wali Kothi and gave an account of their plight to the Commissioner Sahib Bahadur and the Deputy Commissioner Sahib Bahadur. They did not do anything since the original orders had not been issued by them. Thus, no improvement took place in the condition of those suffering people.

The exile of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah had come as a great calamity for the people of Lucknow. There were lamentations in every home. Palaces became desolate; habitations were rased to the ground. The government undertook the work of the widening and construction of roads, and that brought greater destruction. Nobody paid attention to the miserable plight of the unfortunate creatures. This tale of desolation is best told in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 31 October 1856:

> Wherever you see there is trouble; may God protect honour since there is anarchy everywhere. The times are noisy; the iniquitous are in power everywhere—eager day and night to dishonour people; stigmatising men of honour is easy for them. Honest men pass their time in great fear; every evening they are apprehensive lest the night bring them shame and ignominy.
>
> Roads are being built in the city; repairs are going on everywhere. Flags are hung; areas are cordoned off. Uneven

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roads are being smoothed; lanes are being turned into roads. There were three royal houses close to Farhat Bakhsh gardens where *Vizarat* and *Diwan Khana* prisoners were kept: these houses too were pulled down and levelled, and then a wide road was built over them. Then came the turn of the house belonging to the common people along the wall of the garden. This came like an epidemic to those poor people. They cried and wailed, went to the officers, told them about their plight, but all this did not melt their hearts. Crying and wailing was of no avail. The houses were made desolate, destroyed like toy-houses of mud. What misery the times have brought! What misery and desolation for poor people! Now, there is news that a straight road will be built from Iron Bridge to the Canal (of Ghaziuddin Haider). It will inevitably bring destruction of countless houses.

The new administrative measures undertaken by the Company government Bahadur were causing havoc everywhere, falling like lightning and reducing to ashes great palaces and strongly-built houses. Moments came like huge hammers smashing into smithereens incomparable monuments of the Chaghtai style of architecture. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 14 November 1856, tells us the painful story:

> At present, the plan is to pull down eight hundred houses near the Chaupar Wali Astabal and make a new parade ground. On the 28th October, the Administrator of the city, the Barrack Master and Mr. Hill collected the people there and gave them the disturbing information that they had to move away the *amla* of their houses as soon as possible. Delay would not be tolerated. There would be no objections heard, nor would anyone be allowed to take away anything from there after the locality had been pulled down. Certain things cannot be put into words though people do make plans sitting in their homes. They hesitate in going to officers. They lose courage in the presence of officers though among themselves they confabulate...Anyway, Fate is against them.
>
> Pulling down of houses has already started; whatever

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was possible has been salvaged. It seems that Fate is hostile. Everyday brings new misfortunes.

(Vol. I, No. 17)

The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* is a virtual elegy on the destruction of the city of Lucknow. The tale of sorrow and of the loss of past glory is told in each issue of the newspaper. Whole localities were ruined, and thousands of peaceful residents were rendered homeless in the name of urban reconstruction. The exile of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah came almost like an earthquake that brought houses and buildings to the ground. Here is another story of the same kind:

A new road is being built these days from Kolhu Tola to Banak Bazar. This is also part of the official plans. The Superintendent of the road is busy supervising the work. It is heard that thousands of *kachcha* and *pukka* houses have been demolished. This is perhaps because the road has to be in a straight line.

(Vol. I, No. 19, dated 27 November 1856)

Not only were the houses of the common people pulled down but even certain royal palaces and *havelis* were in danger of demolition. The real reason may not have been utilitatian but the fact that the rulers did not want these symbols of past glory to remind the people of the days gone by. They wanted to destroy every tradition that had come down from the past. The task was not easy since these traditions, like some of the royal buildings, were strong and deeply-rooted. Below we give from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* the interesting story of the demolition of Sultani Kalan Kothi:

Recently, the high officials decided to demolish the Sultani Kalan Kothi situated on the bank of the river. When the Barrack Master started the work and calculated the labour expense he realised that it would come to thousands. It was then decided not to waste money on labour charges but to use dynamite instead. This way the dynamite that had been taken out of (royal) stores (*Kothas*) would be properly used. Therefore, the foundation of a wall was bared on the first of Safar. Sixteen pitchers containing dynamite were put under the foundation. The detonation wire was ignited from

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a distance. The dynamite exploded but not a single brick came off the wall. The Sahib was greatly surprised. Angrily he remarked that next time he would think of another device.

On the river bank side some labourers are engaged in pulling down the walls. They work throughout the day but without much result. They are surprised at the strength of the building. Spades are rendered useless and pick-axes are broken; only then does a brick or two come out of its bed in lime, broken into fragments, never complete.

(Vol. I, No. 12)

It is difficult now to imagine the oppression and tyranny of the officers of the Company government Bahadur. Not only were the ordinary houses and buildings demolished and destroyed but even mosques and places of worship were desecrated. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* writes:

Readers must have learnt about the demolition of the mosque near Seekchi Wali Astabal from the (newspaper) *Doorbin*. Now listen about the condition of two other mosques located in Chaupar Wali Astabal. A platoon of white soldiers has been stationed there. The Buland Masjid was now used by the commander of the platoon as his residence. He put up shutters on the three arched gates and thus enclosed the verandah. In the other Qanati Masjid so much lime has been stored that the entire mosque is filled up with it or rather completely covered by it. Only the backwall indicates that there is a mosque there. The mosques near the *pukka* bridge are still intact; the shops and the houses have all been demolished.

(Vol. I, No. 1)

The demolition and desecration of mosques had just started that an incident took place that might have been regarded by the Faithful as an act of divine vengeance and which certainly demoralised the perpetrators of the acts of desecration. The arrogant oppressors lost heart, and the desecration of mosques stopped altogether. We find the following story in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 1 August 1856:

Whatever we had learnt about the mosques in Chaupar

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Wali Astabal was told in detail in the previous issue. Let us now recount something new. The Englishman who had made his home in the mosque was the sergeant of the white platoon. As fate would have it, his wife suddenly died without any apparent cause of illness. Somebody who went to him to pay his condolence suggested that the misfortune might have been caused by the act of the desecration of a place of worship. If he continued to live there it might bring about his own or his sons' death. Such was his terror on hearing this that immediately he vacated the mosque.

(Vol. I, No. 2)

At the time of the annexation of Oudh the royal family had been promised that the change would bring about no adverse effect on their fortunes. The contrary, however, took place. Not only the dependents but even the wives of the Sultan had to suffer adversely. The order about the extradition of the Mahals came as a great blow to the noble ladies. They turned in great perturbation of mind to the Sultan. While the wishes of the Sultan were awaited to be known, forceful implementation of the orders began. The editorial in the issue dated 5 September 1856 comments:

In the previous issue we gave an account of the visit by Chief Commissioner Bahadur to Badshah Manzil. We also gave the news about the order to the Royal Mahals to vacate the palaces. Here is an account of further developments. The Chief Commissioner Bahadur had asked the Mahals to vacate the Palaces by the 14th of August. The latter, however, showed no hurry in doing so as they were waiting to hear from the Sultan. The Sahib sent a reminder to the ladies a few days after the expiry of the stipulated date. He also wrote a letter to the Administrator about this issue. The Administrator did not make a show of force; he only tried to persuade the ladies to comply with the orders. Finally, however, the officers were obliged to use force; they did not even hear any pleas about the coming Muharram. They compelled them to move out bag and baggage. Whatever remained to be lifted at night was moved out the following day under the supervision of the officer of China Bazar Police Station. English guards were posted at the

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first gate of Sultan Manzil. Cavalrymen were posted at the second gate near Nusrat Bagh.

The ladies, greatly upset, reached Qaisar Bagh, and in accordance with the advice of royal employees settled down in the palaces mentioned against their names:

Nawab Khurshid Laqa Amir Mahal Sahiba	The upper part above courtyard in the quadrangular house Shah Burj
Nawab Khurshid Mahal Sahiba	
Bazm Afroz Nawab Dilruba Mahal Sahiba	Shikoh Manzil
Nawab Viqar Mahal Sahiba	
Anjumassultan Nawab Zuhra Mahal Sahiba	Akhtar-e-Hind
Mumtazussultan Gulzar Mahal Sahiba	Sehenchi and Verandah Purshikoh Manzil
Nawab Khurd Mahal Sahiba	Mahalsera of Mana Moti
Nawab Sultan Jehan Sahiba	
Nawab Saiyyida Mahal Sahiba	Sadre-Mubarak
Nawab Farkhunda Mahal Sahiba	
Nawab Imtiaz Mahal Sahiba	Yamin Manzil
Huzoor Mahal Sahiba	Taskin Bakhsh Mir
Nawab Umrao Mahal Sahiba	Badshah Manzil
Malika Mehrtan Afsarunnisa Sahiba	Kacheheri Munshi Muzaffar Ali
Nawab Nishat Mahal Sahiba	
Nawab Yasmin Mahal Sahiba	Darogha Haideri Ki Mahalsera
Nawab Mahramussultan Sahiba	

For an appreciation of the general impact of this tragic incident, the following passage from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* may be quoted:

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> What a calamity befell them unawares! What desolation came into their lives through the revolutions of the times! The people were grief-stricken to see it. They were stunned into silence. What could be done? They just looked at each other, wept and cried.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 7)

Everyone seems to have had an affectionate regard for Sultan Wajid Ali Shah in spite of his love for luxury, fondness for dance and music and indifference to the affairs of the state. This was probably because during his regime there had been a modicum of peace and order. As soon as the reigns of power came into the iron hands of the Company government, the Sultan's regard for his subjects, his care for the poor and his essential humaneness came into sharp relief. The Sultan now became the people's darling. We may quote the following passage from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 14 November 1856:

> The citizens have been heart-broken since the day the Sultan left the country. Something new and untoward takes place everyday. The well-wishers weep to see such incidents. The wretched enemies laugh at and mock them. We are lost in wonder. Unable to keep silent we are now bound to speak the truth.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 17)

Sultan Wajid Ali Shah was in custody at Matia Burj but even there in imprisonment he was deeply concerned about the welfare of his former subjects. He would draw the Company government's attention to the plight of the people inspite of his own misery. In the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 10 October 1856, we find the following about the Sultan's concern for the people's welfare:

> When His Exalted Majesty repeatedly heard about the miserable condition of his former subjects—that mosques are being demolished, the houses of the poor are being pulled down, and the English officers pay no attention to all this—he wrote to the Government and desired justice. He was informed that the Government had not been aware of these conditions. Now that it has come to know about this, it will see to it that justice is done and things are rectified.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 12)

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The Company government Bahadur was basically a trading company which had taken advantage of the incompetence and mutual differences of the Indian ruling classes, and had thus come into power in the country. Power in fact it did not seek; its main ambition was economic. Whatever the motive, it did break the agreement with the state of Oudh and by annexing it, gained full control over it. Sultan Wajid Ali Shah was deposed through deceit. The Begums were removed from the royal palaces. Invaluable treasures were virtually looted. The attempt made by the royal dependents to retrieve some of it were not successful and what had been acquired in decades and centuries was taken away in moments. We have the following account of the forceful possession of the royal treasures by the English in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 5 September 1856:

On the 2nd of September the *thanedar* came, by official order, to the houses with twenty five sweepers to clean them. The same day the Administrator wrote to the Kotwal telling him a treasure was suspected to be buried in the Chhatar Wala house. He asked the latter to be present there at 4 o'clock in the evening along with a number of *beldars*. He too would come, examine the place, find out the site of the treasure and get it dug up. The *Kotwal* accordingly came at the right time. The Administrator Sahib and the house officer of the China Bazar police station too were present there. Many places were dug up; even a wall was pulled down but there was no trace of the treasure.

On the 27th of Zil-Hij, the Chief Commissioner Sahib Bahadur came with a number of other high-ranking officials to the stores (*Kothi*) of Machhi Bhawan. He brought the *Kotwal* and some twenty-five soldiers to the place. Calling Miftahuddaulah, he demanded the key of the royal stores (*Kothas*). The latter refused to give them out of loyalty to the Sultan's government. The Sahib rebuked him and angrily told him that he had the right to break open the locks. He rebuked him for his loyalty to the Sultan and threatened him with death in case he persisted in his refusal. At last, Miftahuddaulah had to hand over the keys of all the nineteen *Kothas*. The royal guards were replaced by the *burqandaz* guards. Now everday Mahmood Khan Kotwal himself

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> or some *thanedar* deputising him comes and prepares an inventory with the help of Govind Prasad, clerk, Miftahud-daulah Bahadur, some servant of Sehatuddaulah and a few royal employees. At the time of departure the royal seal as well as the seal of the *Kotwal* or *thanedar* is put on the locks. To see all this the people weep and feel greatly unhappy.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 7)

In the different issues of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* we find lists of royal properties. Going through them is a saddening experience, chastening us into acquiessence. The faery-like noble ladies of *parikhana* and Jan-e-'Alam would not have dreamt such things were ever possible: those centres of luxury, beautiful royal palaces and objects of decoration and beautification going out of their hands so suddenly and coming into the possession of people who were no better than robbers. Below, we give from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* only one such inventory of goods:

> This is a catalogue of goods taken out of the *kothas* of Machchli Bhawan. Thirteen such *kothas* were opened till the 7th of Muharram. The following items were found therein:
>
> Golden bangles, 1 pair; sapphires and emeralds, 5 pieces; diamonds, 15 pieces; four-stringed necklace of pearls, 1 piece; silver *alams*, 10 pieces; the *patkas* of *alams*, 15 pieces; swords, 1100; European guns, 150; *chiqmaqs*, 50 pieces; *toredar* guns, 50 pieces; China of good quality, 15 pieces; a large number of tents; bottles, glasses etc., 400; dress material and velvet covers, 33 *buqchas*.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 8)

The ammunition stores of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah were virtually museums where arms once owned by his ancestors were preserved. Through the diplomacy of the Company government, the entire military system of the Nawab was sacrificed at the altar of dance and music. Men of action were replaced by dancers. The younger generation of the nobility learnt social etiquette at the houses of *deredar* prostitutes. Manliness was lost in the attempt to acquire feminine virtues. Patriotism, self-respect and collective endeavours were totally

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lacking. There was a dearth of real men of character. When the orders for the annexation of the state were issued, they were received with total passivity; the armies were lost in sleep, the stores of arms and ammunition remained locked. Even the Sultan, instead of offering resistance, decided to go to Calcutta, petition in hand, begging for restoration as if diplomacy were a matter of ethics rather than expediency. The arms and ammunition confiscated by the government under the new dispensation were sold in auction at throw-away prices probably because they had little value as weapons of war. Whatever the reason, the auctions were a fact and have been described in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* in the following words:

> We have already given an account of the royal magazine in the Mangal Sen Wali Kothi. We have also described the auction of guns, swords and daggers. For a few days, the auction remained suspended for some reason. It again started from the 14th of Muharram. Valuable goods are sold at incredibly low prices. The auction is causing wonder in the minds of men—thousands of guns, revolvers, swords, daggers, all unique and expensive, acquired through the diligence of faithful admirers are being sold for nothing, almost being thrown away. Those who see the scene are grief-stricken.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 8)

Grief was meaningless since in the days of the Sultan's glory weapons of war had been deposited away in stores and *kothas* and replaced with instruments of music. However, here is an account of another auction—in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 26 September 1856:

> The Sultan's arms and weapons are still being auctioned—guns, revolvers, swords, *katars*, knives, daggers, *khud bakhtars*, *zara bakhtars*, European, Egyptian, Khurasani, Isphahani, Indian swords, *toredar* guns, *Topidar Chiqmaqs*, single barrel to seven barrel guns.
>
> (There was for sale) a sword on which the words, "bar zeb-e-kamar Nawab Mahabat Jung" were marked in gold; the words, "zeb-e-kamar Hafiz Rehmat Khan" is embossed in gold on a dagger. The English generally prefer to buy

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smaller weapons like knives, daggers and katars; they also buy small curved swords and *khardar* rifles. Things truly of the value of a hundred or two hundred rupees are sold for eight or ten. The spectators are grief-stricken. Though weapons are being sold so cheap, and though the auction has been going on for so long, yet even half of the weapons have not yet been sold out. It is heard that the weapons being auctioned so far are old and of less value; those of a better quality have not as yet been taken out.

Soon the rare and more valuable weapons too were put on the auction (vide *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 3 October 1856):

Auction continued till the day before yesterday at Mangal Sen Wali Kothi. Usually it was held till 10 o'clock. There was a Gujrati sword in the auction on 26 September. Its metal was of a high quality. The words. "Sarkar Abul Mansoor Khan Bahadur Safdar Jung" were written in gold on it. On the 23rd we saw a *toredar* gun being sold for six rupees. The names of "Abul Mansoor Khan Bahadur" and "Muhammad Yunus, artisan" were written on it. "Nawab Shujauddaulah Bahadur" was written on another gun. Both these guns were sold for five rupees each. The following words were written on a sword that was sold for eight and a half rupees: "On the request of Daim Khan Bahadur, Daimuddaulah. Prepared at the cost of one hundred thirty eight rupees".

A number of Isphahani swords were auctioned. On all of them the name of Abul Mansoor Khan Bahadur was written in gold. The prices at the auction of 1 October were still cheaper. Goods worth hundred rupees were sold for one rupee. The sergeant declared that the auction would be suspended that day and that there would be no auction for three months.

(Vol. I, No. 11)

Some aspects of the change brought about by the annexation of Outh were delineated above. Now let us turn to the economic aspects of the change—depression, poverty and unemployment. People of considerable achievement in every field of life were obliged by circumstances to migrate from Lucknow to other places:

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Strange are the ways of fickle Fortune that those whose lives are spent in the pursuit of knowledge, in the acquisition and importing of learning, are put into the stocks of Oppression and Necessity. Saturn reigns over Lucknow. That life and glamour of the city which was rare in the world, unparalleled, unique (is now gone). The city was once peopled by great logicians and theologians, men of good nature, delicate manners, people whose hearts were free of malice, storehouse of virtue, old in wisdom, young in opinion, men in whose presence Hippocrates would be a school-going child, men of the true gentility of nature, men who were a source of benefit to others, to both young and old. In this city now self-respecting people, men who mention their need only before God, are not allowed to stay. Lucknow once was a Garden of eternal bloom. Everyone here was like a nightingale. Happy men lived here. Localities had the variety and richness of a bouquet of flowers. Not only homes but also roads and streets were full of fragrance; angels would willingly come to such a place. These days, however, it is all desolation; the world is where we learn the value of humility.

These days (there was) Haji-al-Haramain Maulana Turab Ali Sahib—a learned and pious man, a great theologian, a recluse, one who prayed at night and fasted during day, unique, unparalleled. The fickle goddess Fortune treated him so badly that he was obliged to leave the city. Maulvi Al-e-Hasan Sahib, resident of Marehra, unique in his own way, invited him repeatedly to come there. At last the entreaties grew so insistent that he had to leave Lucknow for Marehra on Sunday, His disciples and admirers were very unhappy on the occasion. May God make his journey easy, enable him to reach there and also give us an opportunity to see him again. Time was that this city was so crowded that even the wind found it difficult to make its way through the streets. And now the city has no one except ignoramuses and dunces. The lanes, the whole city is desolate.

First, there is unemployment. Then, through the carelessness of foreign rulers, the prices of grains have

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greatly increased. The poor are hard pressed; the prices change everyday. The police officers are greedy (and so they do nothing to control the prices). The traders too are worried; the grain stores are a source of trouble to them. Bajra is being sold at the price of wheat...The *mandis* are desolate. The shopkeepers do not care for anyone; they are deaf. They say the *khhattas* (pits for storing grain) are empty; actually they do not want to take out their stored grain and sell it. There is no escape from hunger and destitution. Everyone is helpless. It is important that the rulers learn about the facts. They should be made afraid of God. They should be told that the subjects want to learn whether crops were good this year or if there was a famine. The government should fix the prices of grain. Anyone selling at a higher price should be punished. They say that the prayer of the hungry is soon granted. By doing what we have suggested the people will pray for the government; there will be praise for it from the east to the west.

(Vol. I, No. 22, dated 15 September 1856)

Thousands of dependents on the Sultan's government were rendered unemployed after the annexation of Oudh. Houses and workshops were destroyed. The devaluation of old learning made it difficult for many to get new kinds of jobs. The chaotic conditions prevailing at that time are mirrored on every page of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*. In the issue dated 1 August 1856, the following grain prices were published:

(For one rupee) wheat, 24 seers; moong, 20 seer; gram, 27 seer; moong poorbi, 30 seer; arhar, 24 seer; masoor; 19 seer; mash, 25 seer; battisa rice, 17 seer; alsi, 17 seer; bans mati rice 12 seer; mustard, 15 seer; gur, 18 seer; Ghee, Rs. 17 a maund; oil, Rs. 8 a maund; sugar, Rs. 10 a maund.

Within two months, however, the world completely changed; unemployment and poverty became endemic. Life became intolerable. We have the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 26 September 1856:

Last week we wrote about the dearness of the prices of grain. There is no reason why prices should rise so high. The weat flour is now selling at fifteen seers a rupee. (Vide

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> the price of wheat above.) Buying things on credit needs courage these days. The government should do something about the poor. If the present conditions continue to prevail any longer, it would bring about great trouble. Traders are accumulating great wealth; the poor are starving, Orders should be issued...that any trader buying grain outside the city would be severely punished. The condition of the poor is very bad, it looks as if a famine has come. Unemployment has come like a scourge in the city, and to cap it all, the traders have increased the prices. The traders have entered into a tacit agreement with each other; ask prices wherever you want, and you will get the same answer everywhere. Now, if the government is seriously interested, it can solve the problem of prices in no time. If such a thing does not happen, it will force thousands to migrate to other places.

The migration of people from Lucknow was a fact. It was not, however, confined to Lucknow alone but had affected the neighbouring districts and areas also. The artisans and workmen in these regions were engaged in a life and death struggle. They were forced to migrate to other places because of unemployment. We learn the following from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 29 August 1856:

> The Magistrate Sabib Bahadur came to learn that the weavers of Mubarak Pur were going away to other places, leaving their homes. The Sahib made enquiries. He asked the *thanedar* of Muhammad Abad the reason for this migration, and also the number of people that had left their homes. The *thanedar* replied that the weavers were starving and had difficulty in earning a living. A thousand weaver had left for Ka'ba Sharif with their families. There were not many buyers of cloth left in Lucknow. This had made it difficult for them to make a living, and so they had left their homes.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 6)

The annexation brought in its wake a series of troubles and misfortunes. Apart from unemployment and poverty there was also an increase in robberies, theft and mischief-mongering. There was thus a serious threat to law and order, breeding in

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its turn a general disenchantment with the government. We have the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 19 January 1857:

Saturn reigns in Lucknow. Thieves have created a lot of stir. Each incident is a wonder, and as they say, you shut your eyes and the turban is gone:

> Mir Sahib! the times are critical;
> Hold your turban with both your hands.

The present chaos reminds us of a saying: Only God protects the blind man's wife! As there is darkness everywhere, may God protect Husainabad, (the bride of this blind city). Such blindness--and the power to rule! It is a clear case of an undeserving person acquiring a precious object.

Since the day the English began to rule this city, the mischief-mongers have came into ascendancy. There is deceit and mischief everywhere. Suits were filed against the Mahals and Begums in civil and criminal courts. The *chaprasis* made trouble at the doors of their houses and tried to impress on them the power of the new government. First, they dragged the *mughalani* of Zohra Mahal Sahiba to the court, Now, the situation is that the *barqandaz* and the peons come to their houses at the slightest pretext and say nasty things to them.

(6 February 1857)

We get brief glimpses into the social life of the British at Lucknow in the pages of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*. Here is one such picture in the issue, dated 3 October 1856:

> One night there was a ball at the Town Hall. There was pleasure and enjoyment everywhere. If their were wives of Englishmen on the one hand there were also, on the other, somc English prostitutes. An Englishman, the friend of the Commander-in-Chief, got up and started dancing with one of those ladies of easy virtue. The other Englishmen and their wives felt unhappy at this mean action.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 11)

The annexation of Oudh had been ordered on the plea that under the Sultan's rule there was total administrative chaos.

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This myth too was soon exploded when people saw that under the new dispensation there was no less administrative anarchy. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* wrote about this aspect of the new dispensation with unusual courage and boldness:

> Somedays ago Abdullah Gobindi sent a memorandum to the Nawab Governor General pointing out that the purpose of the annexation was the welfare of the people. The Proclamation issued at the time of annexation also made it clear that the aim was administrative improvement. There is, for example, the *kachehri* (Court) of Samson Sahib Bahadur, Deputy Commissioner. It is full of the relatives of Munshi Brij Lal. They are so much in power there that they do not let any one else enter it. They do their best to remove others from services there so that their secrets of bribe-taking may not be revealed to others. They accept bribes quite openly. The employees of the state in the days of the Sultan were not so corrupt. Now, they are openly corrupt but the government does nothing against them.
>
> Samson Sahib Bahadur pays no attention to the situation, nor does he make any enquiries. He pays attention only to these men. I sincerely wish that the government may not get a bad name for all this. I also wish that the common people may feel happy and relieved. Orders may be issued to suspend these corrupt people so that the department may be purified and the oppressed may be relieved...
>
> (Vol. I, No. 3, 17 October 1856)

Corruption was endemic everywhere in that transitional age, not confined to Lucknow alone. In this field the poor Indians were greatly outnumbered by Englishmen themselves. Infact, they were leaders of this noble art. The following in the *Tilism-e-Lucnow*, relates to the activities of the Deputy Commissioner of Ajmer:

> ...The Assistant Commissioner resigned and intended to go back to England. While doing so he deposited seventy five hundred thousand rupees with another employee of the Company asking him to send him this amount in annual instalments of five hundred thousand rupees. Those who

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> came to know about this were greatly surprised. They wondered how the Assistant Commissioner was able to accumulate so large an amount in such a short period of time. One can easily imagine the condition if an Indian employee had done such a thing what doubts would have been expressed about his integrity! What questions would have been asked. He would have got nothing but humiliation.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 13, dated 17 October 1856)

The whole country was groaning under the heavy burden of poverty and economic depression. There was no respite from economic exploitation leading to a heavy rise in prices. The employees and officials of the Company Government Bahadur were acting like bloodsuckers. They were committing all kinds of offences against the laws they themselves had made but they were never apprehended. Instead, they continued to hold high offices. Below we give an extract from the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* that highlights corruption among British officials:

> This year the doors have been opened wide to corruption among Englishmen. Huge bribes were given and accepted. Big sums were received. The account of the financial "transactions" of the Assistant Commissioner of Multan has been appearing in the papers for quite some time. The same is true of Captain Peach Sahib Assistant Ram Rao Singh Koti Wale. Similar accusations were made against Major Deckfield Sahib, Magistrate. Major Richard Sahib too was involved in accepting bribes. Similar suits relating to corruption were also filed in courts against other officials. Many Englishmen were thus exposed. What good fortune, however, that most of them are being acquitted; a few days later they are again given government jobs. On the other hand, Indians are punished merely on doubt. They get long terms of imprisonment and are humiliated in many ways. Often they are suspended and have to bear the curse of unemployment:
>
> They are honoured but these others are humiliated;
> What to say! It is all the work of fortune.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 11)

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The charges of maladministration, love for luxury and indifference to welfare of the subjects were a pretext for grabbing and annexing the native states one after the other. The rulers of these states lived in terror of these charges and were always apprehensive lest their states might be confiscated by the Company government. In the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* (Vol. I, No. 30) we have an account of how the native state of Gondu was confiscated after the death of its issueless ruler, and how the amounts due to the heirs were not paid by the Company government. The editor then goes on to narrate other such incidents. The particular aspect of this process which attracts the editor's attention is the fact that most of these native states were a source of patronage to the noble poor and to men of learning. Through confiscation it were these classes who were adversely affected.

Not only were whole states being annexed by the Company government but the rights of rulers in almost every state were being gradually curbed. In the issue dated 5 September 1856 we have the following account of the ruler of Jhajhar:

> The editor of *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* writes on the basis of the report of a correspondent that the Sahib Magistrate is on a tour of that state these days. The Secretary Sahib is also there. One day an orderly committed an offence. The Magistrate imposed a fine of Rs. 5 on him. The Risaldar informed the ruler of Jhajhar about this. The report naturally offended the latter. He wrote to the Magistrate that such offences fell within his jurisdiction; only he had the right to impose such a fine. He further wrote that he was pained at such infringement of his rights.
>
> The Magistrate wrote back that such rights were not earlier exercised by the British only out of courtesy. The Company had now taken away such rights from the rulers...

Having given the above account of the incident at Jhajhar, the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* mourns the gradual erosion of the power of native rulers. All such incidents remind him of the changes of fortune—how the rise of one leads to the fall of others. Then he laments the shortsightedness of the native rulers. They do not distinguish between friends and foes, nor can they find

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any difference between those who are truly loyal and those others who flatter them in the hope of gain.

The Sultans and rulers of native states and their dependents and retinue whose names had the word "Bahadur" (brave) as an essential ingredient were in fact loyal and faithful to the Company government and the "Bahadur" at the end of their names served only to emphasize the irony of the situation. The Company government did whatever it liked, the "Bahadurs" had but to obey the orders. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 16 December 1856, has the following comment:

Reduction in Allowances

The editor *Jam-e-Jehan Numa* writes with reference to the *Morning Chronicle*, dated 7 November, that the salaries and allowances of the princes of the native states of India are going to be reduced. The amount to be paid to them should not exceed the total revenue of the western provinces. According to calculations a reduction of thirty percent may be effected. This proposal would first of all be applied to two of the most important rulers in the country.

The amount paid to the Emperor of Delhi would be reduced to six lakh rupees annually. The amount paid to the Nawab Nazim-e-Bangala would be four lakhs.

(Vol. I, No. 23)

The following is an account of the Nawab of Murshidabad:

Murshidabad

The ruler of Murshidabad used to get an amount of rupees fifteen lakh annually from the Company government Bahadur. The monthly allowance amounts to one lakh twenty five thousand rupees. It is now heard that the Company has before it a proposal to reduce this amount. There is going to be a reduction in it to the tune of three lakh rupees. The Nawab is greatly surprised to hear this. He is all the time worried about this. What can he do except obey the command, loyal as he is. Hurting a weak person like him, however, is not proper.

(Vol. I, No. 22)

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Owing to the mutual differences among rulers and bitter rivalries among their dependents, it was not possible to check the growing power of the Company government Bahadur in the country. Compromise, understanding, loyalty and faithful obedience were the only ways open to the rulers of native states. However, in the unredeemed darkness of this era of decline there were a few rulers whose uncompromising self-respect, courage and bravery did not allow them to accept a subservient position. They saw through the game of the British, and inspired both by self-respect and patriotism, they were willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their family honour. This is what we find in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 5 December 1856, about the Raja of Alwar:

> The *Central Star* writes on the basis of a report from an Agra correspondent that the courageous Raja of Alwar is prepared to offer resistence to the Company government. It is for this reason that the contigents of (British Indian) army coming from different directions are asked to station themselves at Akbarabad. The Raja is believed to have written a strongly-worded letter to the Company government stating therein that the latter's nefarious designs of aggrandisement would not be achieved without the shedding of blood of at least a thousand people. The story of our resistence, the letter continues, would be remembered for long; people would recall how a lion in the house of Alwar fought in such a manner that the enemy's life was in jeopardy. (This ruler) was not spending his life in luxury like the Shah of Oudh, nor did he have a Vazir who proved untrue to his salt. If you have, the letter concluded, peaceful intentions they would be fully reciprocated.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 20)

Let us now turn for a while to the social aspect of contemporary life at Lucknow as it is glimpsed through the pages of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, Lucknow was known for its Muharram before the annexation of the state of Oudh. Though it would be the height of impropriety to call the solemn occasion a festival, there yet was in it something of a great social occasion mixed with the flavour of a literary meet. Beautifully composed elegies and *nohahs* would be recited. There would be, besides,

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a magnificent celebration, a unique series of social and communal events and beautiful illuminations. Originally a religious period of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Husain, soon it came to provide an outlet for the expression of great creative and artistic talents. The experts of a number of arts, traders and artists and artisans found in it an occasion to engage themselves creatively and to earn fortunes. Muharram was not just an occasion for religious purification but a communal event in which various streams of culture and civilisation came together. Though it was basically confined to the religious beliefs and practices of the Imamia community, yet the Sunnis too participated in it with great fervour and enthusiasm.

With the deposition of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah Muharram also lost its "festive" glamour. We have the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 29 August 1856:

> Though certain arrangements and preparation are undoubtedly being made for *'azadari* (ritual mourning) of Muharram—the *imambaras* (houses of ritual mourning) are being cleaned, the *zarihs* (emblematic graves) are being prepared —but, owing to the absence of Hazrat (the Sultan), everyone feels sorry and weeps. People recall the Muharram of the old days and weep. *Dulduls* (emblematic ponies) used to be taken out in processions two months before the Muharram. People used to hold *alams* and change *patkage*. Those who were to recite *marthias* used to practice voices; they would learn by heart and rehearse new *marthias*. Things needed for different events would be arranged; the poor artisans were greatly benefited. This time the different localities of the city are deserted. Who bothers about *taht-al-lafz* (plain, unsung recital) or *soz-khwani* (sung recital of elegies). Everyone is mourning this other misery. Those who used to get grants from the state for *'azadari* are in an undescribable state of misery. They have not been able to make any preparations for *'azadari* this year. They weep and cry and earnestly hope for the return and restoration of the Sultan. Every one is praying for it, for the return of hope in their lives.
>
> (29 August 1856)

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The 10th of Maharram came and passed away. Every home was full of lamentations—this time the lamentations were more personal, over their own ruin too. The grief at the myrtyrdom of Imam Husain was mixed with that over the deposition of the Sultan and with the painful thought of their own ruin. We have the following further account of Muharram in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 12 September 1856:

> Look at the wonderful changes brought about by the revolution of the heavens; look at the darkness of this dark habitation of the world. The Muharram of Lucknow is famous all over the world. The light of these lamps goes far and wide. Everyone has the desire to see this Muharram. There used to be illumination in *imambaras* from the first of the month. Free messes were opened. Sweets were distributed among the poor coming from distant places. This time Fate has turned hostile; the changes of the time have brought about misery. The doors of well-being are closed; the flames of sighs are being raised. The *imambaras* are dark. Ill fate has overtaken us. The desolate atmosphere in Husainabad is a great source of sorrow. The place where illuminations were on such a scale that light reached heavens was this year lost in semi-darkness till the 5th of Muharram. They could only be described from a distance like fire to a traveller. The reason is that those who used to make arrangements are, God forbid, ill. Rafiquddaulah has long been suffering from arthritis. It is so severe that because of pain he begins to utter delirius speech. He is all the time groping to find his *izarband* lest someone have stolen the bunch of keys. How can he in such a condition make arrangements. The proverbial excuse for not doing a thing: "the legs are lame" is literally true in his case. Ali Bakhsh Khan has some serious eye trouble, otherwise he would not have absented himself from work.
>
> In the presence of Shah-Jam-Jah (in Calcutta) great preparations have been made for *ta'ziadari*. One lakh rupees have been granted. Arrangements are being made. Totell the truth, Muharram this year is being celebrated in Calcutta; there is mourning here also but for another reason.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 16)

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When the orders for the annexation of Oudh were issued, Sultan Wajid Ali Shah abjectly surrendered himself to the will of the Company Government. The kind of life he had been leading—luxury, dance and music—had left no scope for any offer of resistence. Finally, he decided to leave home for Calcutta. and then for England. This decision. however, was against discretion and wisdom. Whatever happened to the Begums, royal property and to the citizens of Lucknow was a direct result of this decision. Had the Sultan been adamant, had he decided to remain at Lucknow, many of the unfortunate incidents would not have taken place. As it happened, the exile led to the creation of great beauty at Matia Burj but it completely destroyed the beauty, the culture and the magnificence of Lucknow.

When, inspite of the delicacy of his temperament, his sensitivity and love for the finer things of life, he reached Calcutta he intended to go further to England to present his case before the British Parliament. He was, however, advised against undertaking such an arduous voyage on medical grounds. The voyage was cancelled. Instead of the Sultan, the Queen Mother, the heir apparent, Nawab Iskandar Mirza Hashmat Bahadur, dependants and servants left on the voyage for England. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* writes:

> What great misfortune that Hazrat Zill-e-Subhani, out of his concern for the helplessness of the poor and for the loss of throne undertook the vogage to England. Some well-wishers did not allow him to proceed further from Calcutta. They gave him advice which was accepted. Finally, Her Highness the Queen Mother, along with Iskandar Mirza Hashmat Bahadur and the heir apparent left for England willing to undergo the hardships of the sea voyage.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 26, 12 January 1857)

Owing to Sultan Wajid Ali Shah's loss of power and helplessness or rather, to the majesty and power of the Company government Bahadur, many of the erstwhile nobles and courtiers preferred retirement to the Sultan's service. They totally ignored the past kindnesses of His Majesty and thus revealed in their behaviour a lack of gratitude. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* editorially commented:

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> What strange revolution of the times! Those who were once familiar have now become strangers. Those once trusted have now become alienated. Loyalty and faithfulness are all mere shows and appearances. Some reliable sources indicate that both Bashiruddaulah and Diyanatuddaulah have not come into the presence of His Majesty for some two months. The reason is that His Majesty had asked them to accompany the Heir Apparent and the Queen Mother to England. They, however, did not comply with the request. Tabibuddaulah too at heart was unwillingly to go. He insisted on getting a salary of one thousand rupees a month. Look at the greatness of heart of His Majesty that he kept quiet; though pained, he never uttered a word of complaint. If this is the case with old trusted men, what can be expected of others. It is all due to the nature of present times—man after all is man.

The departure of the Queen Mother for England with some trusted nobles roused the jealousy of those others who were close to His Majesty. In all probability the jealousy was not natural or spontaneous but induced in subtle ways by the agents of the Company government. These jealous companions of the Sultan started poisoning his ears against the members of the delegation.

> As soon as Her Highness, the Queen Mother, left for England, her detractors got an opportunity to create misunderstandings about her. The intention was to cause bad blood among the well-wishers of His Majesty in order to prevent the restoration of the Kingdom. Another news that has been reported by a reliable source is that thc command of the old and the new army has been entrusted to the son of Etimaduddaulah. Appointment and dismissal will depend on his sweet will—so much power has been given to him! How strange that no attention was paid to those loyal officers who had refused to accept offers of employment by the British, nor did they accept pension. They were indifferent even to the welfare of their families. They accepted low emoluments whereas in the past they used to get high salaries. The gentleman who has been appointed as the

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chief of the army is no more than a lad. Possibly the old guard of loyalists would not be happy to serve under him.

(Vol. I, No. 26, 16 January 1857)

There was mutual conflict not only at Metia Burj but also among the members of the delegation that had gone to England. We have the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* dated 27 November 1856:

We have reliably learnt from sources in London that Aulad Ali has ingratiated himself with the Heir Apparent since the day he got employment with him in London. It has caused dissensions among the companion of the Heir Apparent. The well-wishers of the Heir Apparent have become alienated from him. Aulad Ali is a notoriously clever man and a perfect liar. There is apprehension that the presence of this may harm the cause of the Sultan in London. Unity is essential for success in this world. Dissensions lead to failure. For the success of the Sultan's cause it is necessary that there should be complete unity among his followers.

(Vol. I, No. 19)

Maulvi Muhammad Yaqub of Firangi Mahal, the editor of *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, was an admirer and well-wisher of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah. He was sincerely devoted to the cause of the Restoration of Oudh and of the Sultan's return to Lucknow. In the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* he regularly wrote about the progress of the Sultan's case in England. We have the following in the issue dated 26 September 1856:

We have come to know many details of the Queen Mother's arrival in London through reliable sources. The Queen Mother, the Heir Apparent and Mirza Iskandar Hashmat Bahadur reached there on 26th August. They rented a four-storeyed tall building for their stay in London. They did not care for expense but entered the city with great pomp and show. With the same magnificence they proceed-ed towards their newly-acquired home. Their stay there transformed the house into a palace...

As their imminent arrival in London had long been advertised in London, everyone was eager to see them. Great welcome was accorded to them on arrival. Thousands

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of people gathered to see them. Crowds stayed from morning to evening. The Queen Mother came out of *chilman* and sat openly in the room. She talked to a number of people; it is not known who they were. She has brought a magnificent skirt, costing five lakh rupees, for Queen Victoria as a present. It is studded with precious stones unheard of in their splendour and beauty. There are great hopes from the Queen's generosity and kindness. Recently, there was the case of Rajgarh state (in which Queen Victoria kindly intervened).

(Vol. I, No. 10)

The news from England must have been of great interest to the Editor, and so we have the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* dated 10 October 1856:

> The Queen Mother, the Heir Apparent and the General Sahib Bahadur entered the house where they were to stay. Thousands of English men and women thronged the Hotel and wished to have a glimpse of them. They shouted in English that they were eager to see the Indian prince. Major Bird made the Heir Apparent and the General Sahib Bahadur sit in an open Verandah. He himself acted as the interpreter. He spoke in English and told the crowd that the visitors from India were as happy to see them as they themselves had been happy to see the visitors. They have come in the hope of justice. The Queen Mother is about fifty years old. She never came out of her home in the past, and now she has travelled ten thousand miles bearing many hardships and braving storms. She did all this only in the hope of getting justice against oppression. The Company was greatly unfair to them; it ruined her royal family. Forgetting the agreement, it confiscated the state. The Governor General too has openly acknowledged the fact in the Proclamation.
>
> (The state of Oudh) was always a friend and ally of the British. It helped them with men and money in the fight against Kabul, Gwalior and Punjab. The Company still owes large amounts of money to the state of Oudh. The British were helped in many difficult situations, and now this is what they have given us in return. The charge

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of maladministration is only an excuse for the annexation of Oudh.

Now, I ask you: if discontent among the common people should be enough reason for annexation of a country, then England may be annexed by France for the same reason. Will you agree to such a proposition? The crowd shouted that it would never agree to such an injustice. Thus did the Major present the Sultan's case before the common people of England and asked their help and cooperation in the cause. The people of London wholeheartedly agreed to participate in the struggle. Thereafter they dispersed and returned home.

(Vol. I, No. 10, 10 October 1856)

Every word of the quotation given above expresses the editor's loyalty and love for Sultan Wajid Ali Shah. Unlike many others of his profession at the time he was neither daunted by the power of the Company government nor tempted by hopes of gain. The editor was truthful and forthright in reporting the development in the Sultan's case. This does not mean that he was not critical of the Sultan. He does concede the charge of maladministration. However, he earnestly hoped the state would be returned to the Sultan, and that the delegation would be successful in England. The issue dated 31 October 1856 gives an account of the gracious welcome extended by the Queen to the delegation:

The Queen of England has given to the Queen Mother a magnificent house to stay in and has asked the government officials not to charge any rent. The meeting between the two has not as yet taken place. Bird Sahib is doing his best to plead the case of the Restoration. Many Englishmen discuss the issue among themselves.

(Vol. I, No. 15)

While the common English people were generally in favour of the Restoration, the agents of the Company government worked for the grant of pension to the Sultan. The editor of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* commented:

These days the members of the Court of Directors, that is, the Company governors, are trying to persuade the Heir

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> Apparent and the General Bahadur not to pursue their case against the government but to accept pension instead of the Restoration. An Englishman who once stayed in this city and was the recipient of many honours and obligations from the state of Oudh, is now an employee of the British government and serving as the *Mukhtar-e-Kul* of Raja Dilip Singh of Lahore. He is a man of some consequence in the government. Once day he came to visit the General Bahadur. As a compensation, so to say, for what he had earlier received he suggested that the latter persuade the Sultan to accept pension. The General replied that he had not undertaken that long voyage as a pleasure trip. (Thus he rejected the proposal).
>
> (Vol. I, No. 15, 23 January 1857)

The royal delegation had reached England on 26 August 1856, but even by April 1857 it had not been given an opportunity to see the Queen. This caused doubts to be raised in the minds of the Sultan's well-wishers. We have the following in the issue dated 10 April 1857:

> We have received a valuable letter from London from a friend. It was posted on the 1st of Rajab and it reached us on the 5th of Sha'ban. He writes that Her Majesty came to London but has not so far given an opportunity to the delegation to see her. The oppressed and the helpless have not so far been able to see the dispensers of justice. The reason is that without the permission of the Minister (Secretary) for Indian affairs the Queen cannot see anyone. (Ironically enough), the Minister is the same gentleman as had proposed the annexation of the State of Oudh. May God show his mercy!
>
> (Vol. I, No. 27)

While Maulvi Muhammad Yaqub, the editor of *Tilism-e-Lucknow*. was trying to give hope to the oppressed subjects, through his spirited and logicial writings. about the restoration of Oudh like other states, there arrived in Lucknow Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah (the hero of the freedom struggle) and began to charm and enthuse people with his speeches. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* writes:

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> These days there has arrived in the city a gentleman by the name of Ahmadullah Shah, dressed like a beggar but enjoying all the comforts of the rich. First, he came to the inn of Mu'tamiduddaulah, but now he is staying at Ghasiari Mandi. The place is delightful. A large crowd gathers there on Mondays and Thursdays; the old and the young of the city come there. Generally discussions take place there though the style is a little unusual. Lost in ecstacy, tbey spread fire on the ground. The burning coals are swallowed by some of the companions. The remaining fire is extinguished by people lying on it. Neither the clothes nor the throat is burnt. Thus does he show these 'miracles'. Again in ecstasy he raises his hands towards the sky and somehow gold coins come into them. These coins are given to the singers. The show thus goes on morning and evening before the public.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 18, 21 November 1856)

A few months later when more people began to be attracted towards him, Ahmadullah Shah gave a call for *jehad*. He began to persuade people to get ready for fighting a religious war. We find the following in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, dated 30 January 1857:

> That gentleman, Ahmadullah Shah, who is staying in Ghasiari Mandi speaks out whatever comes to his mind. There is always a large crowd gathered there. Often he recalls what happened to the late Maulvi Amir Ali Sahib. He propagates *jehad*. When the news reached the officials, they set about doing something to check his dangerous preachings. By their orders the *Kotwal* came to him on 20th January. He warned him that his preachings were improper; he was spreading discontent among the people.
>
> When the Shah Sahib opened his mouth, more nonsense came out of it. He told the *Kotwal* that he (the *Kotwal*) too was a Muslim. As a Muslim was it not his duty to *jehad*? were not the conditions ripe for a holy war only if the means for doing so were available? He said that he (the Shah Sahib) was prepared to wage a holy war but the means unfortunately were not available.

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When the struggle for freedom really began, the first salvo was fired at the time of the trouble connected with the new type of cartridges. People's minds were beset with doubts about subtle attempts at religious conversion. The first news of this kind was published in the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* on 13 February 1857:

> In the cantonment (at Ambala) a strange situation prevails. A large number of English soldiers are stationed there. A new kind of parade has been started there; it is very impressive. Four soldiers, one Nayak, one Havildar and one English officer from each platoon have been selected and sent there (for training). All this has been done quietly, hidden from public view. The reason probably is that these soldiers are being trained in the use of a new kind of cartridges.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 30, 13 February 1857)[1]

Another news in this connection was published in the next issue:

Calcutta

> *The Englishman*, a learned English newspaper, writes that there are widespread rumours circulating among troops stationed at Dumdum and Achanak—and these rumours are causing great concern—that the higher officers in the army are making subtle attempts to convert soldiers to Christianity.

The discontent against British rule was being encouraged by provocative articles in the Urdu press. The trouble about the cartridges served only to further inflame the passions. We have the following in the issue dated 6 March 1857:

> What we write below is taken from *Jam-e-Jamshad* (Meerut). Some telegraphic news from Meerut cantonment is causing great concern. Officials greatly worried. Details not known. Rebellion in the Company army. Disobedience everywhere. Rajahs in the neighbourhood raising their heads. Nine hundred white soldiers in trouble at Meerut. The trouble

1. Vol. I, No. 30, 13 February 1857,

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caused by Indian platoons. All these are strange matters.
(Vol. I, No. 33, 6 March 1857)

There was another interesting news a fortnight later:

An official letter from the Magistrate, Delhi, has recently been received. It is written therein that in the neighbouring areas of Delhi, too, *puris* have been distributed. They have been given to all the *numberdars*. It is not known who distributed these *puris*. Whose life is *puri* (finished)? It is heard that the distribution of *puris* began from Akbarabad.
(Vol. I, No. 35)

The new type of cartridges are a recurring theme in issue after issue. We have the following in the issue dated 10 April 1857:

The *Phoenix* (Calcutta) writes that the ends of the new type of cartridges were closed with beef and pork. Both Hindus and Muslims objected to their use. The latest unfortunate incident occured when an English officer ordered a particular regiment at Berampur to use them. The soldiers refused to accept them and were in a rebellious mood. The Colonel has collected a few cavalrymen and cannons to defend himself. The soldiers, on the other hand, are united and intend marching towards Calcutta.

There is another news in the same issue, with reference to *The Englishman* Calcutta. It is reported that the army was kept ready and vigilant throughout the night guarding the fort. What the danger was is not known.

The trouble about the cartridges had by now acquired the proportions of an earthquake. Meanwhile certain other incidents too took place to transform into certainity the people's doubts about coversion. A minor incident at Mandyavan, a big cantonment near Lucknow, caused a good deal of discontent in the neighbouring areas. The *Tilism-e-Lucknow* writes:

A certain drug had come from Kanpur to Mandyavan for use in the hospital. The English doctor took out some drug from a bottle, tasted it on the tongue, and then spat it into the bottle again. Some Hindus and Muslims who watched the incident told the waiting patients outside. Generally the news spread far and wide. When a Muslim doctor came

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to the hospital and gave the same drug to the patients, they refused to take it and said that they were unwilling to become Christians. They were told that that was drug from a different bottle but even then they did not take it... (The Muslim doctor and others at the hospital) informed the English doctor about the people's complaint but the latter did not bother about it. He insisted on the drug being served to the patients. The subordinates again requested him to come to the hospital, throw away the particular bottle and serve the drug from other bottles in the presence of the patients. The doctor still refused to come. The people, on the other hand, now had strong doubts about the drugs. The *subedars* and havildars were informed about the people's discontent. The English doctor was still adamant. He asked for the names of the patients who refused to take the drug. The *havildar* replied that it was difficult to comply with his request as he did not want to do harm to anyone by submitting his name. The doctor angrily asked him to go away and let the patients die.

At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon the General was informed about the incident. He came to the hospital. He found the condition very disturbed. First, he went to the patients and asked them about their complaint. They told the real reason. The General sent for the drug, and in the presence of the patients threw the bottle on the ground. Thereafter he asked the patients to take the drug from the other bottles which they willingly did. He asked them to give him information about anyother trouble. Everyone was happy to hear this and the discontent came to an end. The General returned to his bunglow.

Some mischievous people were still angry with the doctor. They set fire to his bunglow at night. Everything was burnt up. The doctor ran away and was thus able to save his life.

(Vol. I, No. 38, 10 April 1857)

With such minor incidents began the series of disturbances that ultimately led to the Mutiny. The issue dated 7 April 1857 has the following news item:

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Achanak

The Editor of *Central Star* informs us that the troops stationed at Achanak and Barrackpore have started rioting. They have burnt up the Cantonment.

The ripples caused by the rioting at Achanak and Barrackpore sent waves of shock and violence throughout the country. The armed forces were in a state of agitation. Each dawning day brought greater and greater concern. The issue dated 1 May 1857 brought news of the first stirrings of the Mutiny:

These days disobedience and indiscipline in the English army has become widespread. All the Sahib Bahadurs (English Officers) are in danger. They have placed cannons wherever there is fear of rebellion. The platoons in the Mandyavan Cantonment are in a rebellions mood; they are not obeying their officers. This is the effect of the incident involving the drug given by a doctor. His bunglow was burnt up. Even then the soldiers were not satisfied. The doctor may be said to have deliberately provoked the trouble by hurting the religious sensibilities of both the Hindus and the Muslims. Another reason (for discontent) is the incident involving the cartridges. Two platoons had been dismissed from service for refusing to use the cartridges. It is heard that now they are coming to Lucknow. Still another cause is the wheat flour being sold. It is said that bones of cows and pigs are mixed in it. Small pieces of bones have been discovered in the flour. People say such flour would now be sold in the market undoing their religious faith. The fourth cause is the dismissal from service of two platoons. Soldiers of considerable seniority were unceremoniously dismissed from employment. They have now come to Kanpur, and their presence is causing disenchantment with English rule. Everyone says the hard-work and service of these soldiers was not recognised. First, they were given such cartridges to use, and when they quite legitimately objected to using them, were forthwith dismissed from service. Thus do people foolishly argue with themselves and say that obedience would lead them too to such a fate.

(Vol. I, No. 41, 1 May 1857)

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The last issue of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* was brought out on 8 May 1857. Thereafter, Lucknow too was consigned to the flames of rebellion. Some of the heat and glow of those flames can be felt even in the words of the last editorial:

Lucknow

> Someone has again lighted the flame of rioting and violence (at Lucknow). The Mandyavan cantonment was set on fire; the 8th Company was burnt up, causing great concern to everyone. The man who did it has not been traced; the puzzle has not been solved. Strange are the tricks played by Fortune. It is said that (the trouble began) since the day the new type of cartridges arrived in the cantonments. Soldiers were unhappy. These cartridges led to rioting in the cantonments of Achanak, Ambala and Ferozepur. These riots caused discomfort to many and deprived others of their jobs.
>
> Such rioting seems to have started here in our native city too. Everywhere people are talking about what happened recently. The platoon captain ... made an announcement at the parade in Musa Bagh cantonment that the new type of cartridges were to be used by the soldiers at shooting practice. Those men of little understanding were greatly terrified to hear these orders. Though outwardly they were bold enough to refuse to accept the cartridges, yet in their hearts they were greatly terrified. Sirnam Singh, subedar; Shivdin Singh, jamadar; Bhairon Singh and Mughal Beg, nayaks; along with Gulzar Khan, Raghubir Singh and Ramdat Pandit consulted each other. The fear of the Englishmen ... (was really the cause of) their disobedience and rebellion ... They wrote a letter to the 32nd platoon informing them that they were in trouble and liable to be punished for disobedience. It is feared that soon reinforcements would come to apprehend and punish us for things we have not done. We are co-religionists and so inform you. We hope there would be unity among us.
>
> (Vol. I, No. 42, 8 May 1857)

If on the one hand, the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* was, warming the hearts of its readers with accounts of internal turmoil and

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increasing mood of disobedience in the people, then, on the other, it was praising the growing military strength of China and Iran as opposed to Britain. These accounts were an indirect source of encouragement to the Indian people to shed their sense of inferiority which had long been bred in them owing to unfavourable circumstances.

> The *Friend of India* has estimated the armies of the Emperor of Iran to consist of 324860 men. All these soldiers are greatly devoted to the Emperor. In the army there are ten thousand brave infantrymen and eight thousand cavalrymen who are highly trained in the art of warfare. Each one of them is equal to hundred men of the enemy; the armies of the enemy are helpless when faced with these men of courage.
>
> *The Telegraph*, Bombay, thinks that each soldier of the Emperor's army is like the legendary heroes of yore—Rustam and Isfandyar. The enemy gives way when they... move forward. Death itself loses courage when it is their turn in the battlefield. The English army has had no experience of facing them and so has no idea of their courage and bravery.

(Vol. I, No. 32, 27 January 1857)

> The *Kashf-al-Akhbar* writes that large groups of people from Yamen, Arabia, Turkey and Afghanistan have come to show their solidarity with the Emperor of Iran. A large number of *mujahedin* have come; they have brought their provisions and supplies with them. Their intention is to take part in the *jehad*. Their number is increasing. They encourage Muslims; they are prepared to sacrifice their property and life in the service of the Emperor of Islam. What brave, strong and courageous men there are among these groups! They say that one who kills an infidel is a ghazi (the Victorious one). Shirking such a duty is an act of betrayal. One who dies (on the battlefield, fighting the infidels) is a martyr. Thus, one who takes part in a *jehad* (holy war) is happy (whether he lives or dies).

(Vol. I, No. 38, 10 April 1857)

The *Delhi Gazette* informs us that three thousand Russians have entered the Iranian border. Another news is that

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seven thousand cavalrymen, tried and experienced, brave and courageous are accompanying them. They are all heading towards Herat.

These Russians are employed by the Iranian government. They have collected a huge army of selected, brave men at Tehran. The soldiers are given all kinds of comforts. That there is going to be a war is certain.

(Vol. I, No. 41, 1 May 1857)

Qalat

These days the news are circulating everywhere (causing concern to those who hear them) that groups of soldiers along with experienced Iranian fighters came close to Sindh. The heavens shook with terror; the earth trembled with fear. It is said everywhere that brave Englishmen and courageous Iranians ranged themselves in battle order. It looked as if the Doomsday had come and the Trumpet was going to be blown. Many famous English officers and a large number of soldiers were killed. The lot of victory was drawn in favour of Iran.

(Vol. I, No. 41, 1 May 1857)

Chaman

(Passangers travelling by) a certain ship have brought the news that the Chinese have destroyed all the factories and and the postal services established by the English (in China) They are all the time collecting tried and experienced soldiers so that they could throw out the British and the Americans. They are eager to do this. So far as the British are concerned they have neither supplies nor police or army. Why they are not doing anything is difficult to understand. It is not easy for them to stay in China now; they are being uprooted from there.

(Vol. I, No. 41, 1 May 1857)

Sehr-e-Samiri, Lucknow:

Atiq Siddiqui has written the following about *Sehr-e-Samiri*; it may be worthwhile to quote him:

Five months after the publication of the first issue of *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, another newspaper known as *Sehr-e-Samiri* was

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started on 17 November 1856. This was a weekly. Its editors were Gher Narayan Ayyash and Pandit Brij Nath.

Siddiqui did consult the file of the newspaper preserved in Azad Library, Muslim University, Aligard but he has certainly erred about the editorship of the newspaper. Ahsan Marehravi too has referred to Gher Narayan Ayyash as the editor of the paper. This is, however, contrary to facts. Pandit Brij Nath was not the editor but the owner of the printing press of the *Sehr-e-Samiri*. The newspaper too was owned by him. The printing press was situated at the Chhatta of Bal Krishna near Sarai Ma'ali Khan, and the *Sehr-e-Samiri* was published from there.

Certain interesting facts are revealed by a study of the *Sehr-e-Samiri*, Almost all the issues of the first volume—No. 3 to 27—are preserved. The third issue indicates that in the beginning the newspaper was issued under the editorship of the well-known poet, Amir Minai. In the lower portion of the second column on page 8 there is clear indication that Amir Minai was the editor of the paper.

In the fifth issue there is a statement with the heading "Submission" which reveals that Amir Minai was no longer the editor of the paper. It is also indicated that his place was taken by someone by the name of Raghubir Narayan Ayyah. The remaining issues reveal that Ayyash Sahib continued to be the editor till the end, and the newspaper remained in regular circulation till the last issue.

The words "Ya Khair" used to appear at the top of the title-page. One third of the upper part of the first page used to be full of decorative designs. In the middle of these designs in an oval-shaped blank space the name of the newspaper was printed. Above the title there appeared the following two verses.

Although the name is *Sehr-e-Samiri* (the magic of Samiri)
This is nothing short of a miracle.
(It is) the dust beneath the vehicle of Gabriel,
(It is) the dust beneath the hoof of the horse of pen.

Below the decorative designs two more verses were printed in boxes:

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First, there should be the praise of the Creator
Whose Messenger is the true-tiding-Bearer
Then there should be praise for the King of jins and men
(the Prophet)
To whom Gabriel brought the Tidings.

Date in both Christian and Hirji calendars was printed below the couplets given above. Usually the date was printed in the following form: "2nd of the month of Rabi-al-thani, 1273 A.H. corresponding with 1st of the month of December 1856 Christian, the day: Sunday". In the box below issue number, volume number and an advertisement were printed. The advertisement used to be in verse that reads like parody:

Write, O pen, the advertisement of the paper:
The whole world is waiting for the paper.
Do write that the paper is printed on Mondays,
And it is circulated on Tuesdays.
Thus it will shine—this star of printing,
The body of print will become alive.
Truthfulness of news is the aim—as far as possible;
"Purification" of the news is the aim—as far as possible.
Nothing to do with the select or the common people,
The writer is concerned only with his own duty.
We will praise the good,
And condemn the bad.
Whether praise or blame—all will be proper;
This newspaper is a true account of deeds.
If somebody sends news of general interest (to be printed)
He will not have to pay anything.
However, if the matter to be printed is of particular interest only
Not related to common interest
The charge will be at the rate of half anna a line,
Let it be known to everybody.

This jingle was followed by the rates of subscription: monthly: 12 annas; (advance) annually: seven and a half rupees; at the end of the year: ten and a half rupees. The first page contained nothing except what has been detailed above. In the first column of the second page there used to be local news

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under the heading "Lucknow". Every page of the newspaper used to be divided into two columns, and every column had about twenty-five lines. The local news were accasionally continued on the third page also. Sometimes fresh local news were printed on a supplementary page if the newspaper had already been printed.

The *Sehr-e-Samiri* is a faithful record of contemporary life at Lucknow and the neighbouring areas of Oudh. Economic crisis, political conflict, poor conditions of life and maladministration are truthfully and exactly portrayed in its pages. The way it analyses the decadence of Lucknow is deeply touching; it evokes extraordinary pity on the poor condition of the former Sultan's subjects:

> Alas, the land of Lucknow! What a pity that lack of employment has made everyone helpless; great lovers of life have lost heart. Otherwise, the artisans of this place would produce things that evoked wonder in the minds of the onlookers. Alas, this land is now lost in darkness. The hand of the ever-various time has ruined this garden. The revolution of the heavens has deprived us of the means of living. Thousands have lost nerve and left the city; thousand others are leading a wretched life. Lack of means has made existence precarious, only if God, the most merciful, has pity on this city, it will again prosper; otherwise it will be completely destroyed within a few days.

In its Proclamation at the time of the annexation of Oudh, the Company government had announced that it would protect the life and property of all those, whether officers or jagirdars or the common residents of Oudh, who would willingly accept the rule of the Company government and obey its orders unhesitatingly. The Proclamation had promised that full thought would be given to the development of the region of Oudh. Life and property would be fully protected and, the Proclamation promised, there would be no infringement of people's rights.

Notwithstanding such clear and categorical assurances, the rewards given to the people of Oudh (for their willing acceptance of British rule) were extremely meagre—as the poet puts it: like dew should be awarded out of the water of the sea to

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the thirsty. Even these rewards and acts of graciousness were confined to a select band of loyal well-wishers of the government. Rewards were also given to a few who were considered to be potential mischief-makers. This was done to shut their mouths forever. Such people too were obliged to accept these rewards owing to their total lack of means and helplessness. The *Sehr-e-Samiri* writes:

> From the 7th of February to 25th of August 1856 orders were issued by the Nawab Governor Sahib Bahadur to distribute (awards) from the Company treasury among certain officers of the army. Ali Bakhsh Khan, risaldar, and Nadir Husain, commandant, Battalion Asghari, were each given two hundred rupees monthly. The daroghas in the artillery and the captains of Tilangas were granted a monthly salary of hundred rupees each. May God the other employees of the Sultan too be given similar grants. Thousands used to get salaries from the royal treasury. They are all unemployed now. May God their turn too might come.

Inspite of poverty and starvation many people did not like to accept pensions from the Company government after leaving the Sultan's service. Those who were forced by circumstances to accept pension from the Company government were made targets of irony and sarcasm and humiliated by all, high and low alike. We have the following in the *Sehr-e-Samiri*:

> Haider Ali, captain in the Nadari platoon was an old servant of the Sultan. He proved himself loyal and true to his salt (in the following way). Though the Sultan-e-'Alam had employed him throughout and taken good care of him, he (returned the Sultan's graciousness) by accepting pension from the Company government "in a weak moment". He paid no thought to the Sultan's kindness. May God give early success to our Shah-e-jehan-panah (world-protecting King)! May the mirror of his desire soon show the gracious face of his objective!

Though Sultan Wajid Ali Shah was living in exile in Calcutta, the citizens of Lucknow were hoping against hope that he would soon be given back his throne since the Sultan

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was innocent and justice would certainly be done to him. They hoped that the Sultan would soon come back to Lucknow successfully. There are a number of items in *Sehr-e-Samiri* about this fond hope:

> ... Mirza Baqar Sahib accompanied the Heir Apparent during the voyage to England. He occupied an exalted place among the Prince's companions. While in England the Prince accorded him the place of an ambassador and sent him back to the Sultan in this capacity. Mirza Baqar boarded a British mail ship which crossed the seas on 16th Rabi-al-Awwal 1273 A.H. He brought a letter from the Prince to the Sultan and also a number of presents including a watch. He has narrated the interesting story of the delegation's experiences in England. He has disclosed that the Queen (of England) is busy in her pleasure-trips and hunting. The delegation that voyaged to England is still waiting (for the Queen's favour). However, there is hope of early fulfilment. The Queen would soon be returning (to work). High and noble Englishmen, members of the exalted court of Parliament are unanimous in their opinion that justice is delayed only upto the time of the return of the just Queen—the moment she returns from her pleasure-trip, the fortunes of the unfortunate would turn in their favour. Evil planets would fall to the ground like tears of regret. The same good old days of the kingdom of Oudh would return with all their past glory.

Sultan Wajid Ali Shah had been forced by circumstances to leave for Calcutta all at once. Huge expenditure, however, and lack of income soon reduced him to penury. The condition became so bad that he was occasionally obliged to visit his former courtier's houses. Whether the following story is true or not is difficult to say. It was published in *Sehr-e-Samiri* and may certainly be true in its general drift:

> A letter has been received from a reliable correspondent informing that Hazrat Sultan-e-'Alam frequently visited the residence of Nawab Ali Naqi Khan Bahadur. The Sultan thus graced the place with his presence. The Nawab was greatly surprised by this new practice. The unusual custom

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appeared amazing to other courtiers too. The secret has now come to light. One day Sultan-e-'Alam came to the Nawab's residence. After showing royal favours the Sultan asked the Nawab to lend him Rs. 70/-. He told him that the money was urgently needed and the latter had to get it for him from wheresoever he liked. The Nawab refused saying he himself was destitute. Insistence was countered by refusal. The altercation continued for a while. It is still continuing. Let us see what the result is going to be.

The annexation of the State of Oudh had created widespread excitement and concern throughout the country. All the Rajahs and Nawabs were now greatly worried about the future of their own states. Every day there appeared discouraging and disturbing news which seemed to confirm the rumours. Here is one such news-item from the *Sehr-e-Samiri*.

News about the Rajah of Gwalior

The Editor writes that very soon the state of Gwalior too would be annexed in British territories like Lucknow (Oudh). (It will happen) when the present trouble is over. If the Rajah (of Gwalior) keeps his promise to pay the amount of one crore rupees to the government, he may continue to rule for some time more. This too is the good fortune of the Company government that there are such acute difference between the mother and the son (the Queen Mother and the Rajah of Gwalior).

Here is another news of the same kind, perhaps a little more disturbing:

Newspapers write that the whole of Rajputana will be annexed in the British territories and will come under the jurisdiction of the Company government. It is not clear when exactly it is going to happen. Whatever is known is being disclosed here: there is great maladministration in the (native) states of Haiderabad, Kashmir and Gwalior. These are the states to be annexed first.

It was at the śame time that rumours began to spread about reduction in the allowances of the Emperor of Delhi and the

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Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. The editor of *Sehr-e-Samiri* published the following news in this connection:

> The government intends to reduce the allowances of the Emperor of Delhi and Nazim of Murshidabad. The Nazim would now get four lakh rupees, and so would the Emperor of Delhi. Thus there would be a saving of twelve lakh rupees. This looks like a good economy measure on the part of the government. If the government proposes (to reconsider) the agreements and this leads to a reduction (through confiscation) in the property of the pensioners, it would mean a saving of seventy five lakh rupees thus augmenting the government coffers.

The times were no doubt greatly critical. Murder, bloodshed and arson were common. The extraordinary restrictions imposed by the government as well as its corrupt and dishonest policies were having a demoralising effect on the people. It was in such a charged atmosphere that the affairs relating to the use of cartridges came as the last straw on the camel's back. It added fuel to the fire and created strong anti-British feelings in the country. There was widespread violence and rioting. We have the following in the *Sehr-e-Samiri*:

> We had learnt from newspapers sometimes ago that orders were issued to the soldiers at Barrackpore or Achanak that they were to use a type of cartridges whose ends were stopped with fat. This was the root of endless trouble. The soldiers refused to obey the orders since they had great regard for religion. There is now another news in *Sultan-al-Akhbar* with reference to the *Phoenix* that the same interference with religion still continues. The same orders have been issued to the soldiers at Barampur. The soldiers came to know about these new orders through their platoon officers. Since they had great regard for their religion, they unanimously replied that though they were always willing to comply with orders, they had objections to obeying this particular order. They would rather lose their lives than obey commands that were against their religion. Sensing disobedience, the officer immediately sent for a few canons and cavalrymen. The soldiers too started

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getting ready for a fight. They kept vigil throughout the night lest the British might attack them unawares. This distributed situation continued for a few days. A good many common people in the neighbouring areas left their land and homes and ran away for the safety of their lives. It is said that the soldiers of the 19th regiment are in such a rebellious mood that they have left for Calcutta without informing their officers. They have carried away their arms and ammunitions too. We believe that the government are not wise in issuing such strict orders to the soldiers particularly at a time when there is so much violence and lack of law and order in the country.

The trouble that started in the cantonments of Barrackpore and Barampur soon spread like a forest fire throughout the country. The people of Lucknow who were already enraged at the annexation of the state were very deeply incensed by such provocative acts and incidents. A desire for revenge had now gripped them. As in other Indian cities, the trouble here too started in the cantonments? The *Sehr-e-Samiri* writes:

Lucknow

... Six hundred soldiers ... went out of control when orders were issued to them to use the new kind of cartridges. In a rebellious mood they seemed ready to create trouble. A letter was sent by them to the officers at Mandyavan. Realising the gravity of the situation, the government set about removing the cause of the trouble. The rebellious soldiers were surrounded by loyal forces on all sides. They were now helpless and were thus outwitted. They lost heart and soon began to repent their folly.

How long could the English hope to perpetrate such oppressions and tyrannies over the people of India? The desire for revenge had spread like wild fire throughout the country; it was so intense that the British could not hope to defend themselves by strategies or policies. Lucknow could not have remained a silent spectator owing to the grudge it bore with regard to the deceitful annexation of the State of Oudh. Having lost its patience due to the growing tyrannies of the British it too entered the fray against their rule. The people of Lucknow

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proved more than a match for the British inspite of their weakness. Whatever the result, they did give proof of their love for freedom and courage. We still remember their heroic deeds with pride.

Among the rumours that had spread far and wide in the country on the eve of the rebellion of 1857 there was one that filled every heart with hope; it was relating to the possible invasion of India by the Emperor of Iran. Everyone believed that the attack by the Iranians would prove fatal to the British. Countless news items were published in *Sehr-in-Samiri* pertaining to this subject. It was such a common news that there was hardly a newspaper that did not publish it. The frequent publication of this news indirectly indicates the passive and defeatist mentality of the Indian people at that time. The *Sehr-e-Samiri* published the following news about the coming of a Prince of Shiraz:

> A prince of Shiraz is moving forward with ten thousand brave soldiers and fifteen cannons. His manly courage and lion-like daring are a challenge to the brave. When he comes close to the British forces, he would no doubt prove his mettle. Only God knows how many shall die at his hands.

There are references to the following Indian newspapers in the *Sehr-e-Samiri*:

> *Central Star*; *Morning Chronicle*; *Doorbin*, Calcutta; *Chashmah-e-Faiz*, Sialkot; *Umdat-al-Akhbar*; *Sadiq-al-Akhbar*; *Sadiq-al-Akhbar* (Qadri); *Aftab-e-Hind*; *Nur-al Absar*; *Habib-al-Akhbar*; *Akhbar Bahar*; *Subh-e-Sadiq*; *Mufid-al-Khalaiq*; *Akhbar Murtazai*, Peshawar; *Kashf-al Akhbar*; Bombay; *Muhtashim*; *Punjabi Akhbar*; *Gulshan-e-Nau Bahar*, Calcutta; *Koh-e-Nur*, Lahore; *Rauzat-al-Ta'lim*; *She'r-al-Hind*, Rajasthan; *Jam-e-Jehan Numa*; *Sultan-al-Akhbar*; *Matla'-al-Akhbar*; *Akhbar E'jaz*; *Nur-e-Maghrabi*; *Mazhar-al-Akhbar*; *Agra Akhbar*; *Shu'a'-al-Shams*, Multan; *Taj-al-Akhbar*, Delhi; *Mathura Akhbar*; *'Azim-al-Akhbar*; *Mufarrah-al-Qulub*; *Gulzar-e-Nau Bahar*; *Asrar-al-Akhbar*; *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*.

The *Sehr-e-Samiri* was usually published on eight pages of

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two columns each. However, occasionally the number of pages was increased to ten. Apart from local news, it also published news about other Indian cities and foreign countries which it usually culled from other newspapers. News from within the country were also received through correspondents. Special attention was given to the truthfulness of the news published. Stylistically speaking, the *Sehr-e-Samiri* was a copy of the rhymed and ornate prose of Rajab Ali Beg Suroor. There was, however, greater clarity and flow in it because of its journalistic origin. The tragic events of the age had given a certain effectiveness and ease to its prose. However, there was nothing particularly individual about the style of *Sehr-e-Samiri*; the other newspapers published from Lucknow at the time shared the same qualities. The arrangement of news in the paper was quite good. They were printed under appropriate headings.

A praiseworthy quality of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* was the forthrightness and boldness with which it criticised the government of the East India Company though the newspaper itself was only in its infancy and the Company government was in the heyday of its political power. Even the praise that it occasionally showered on the Company government was not unmixed with hidden barbes of irony and sarcasm. It had a strong commitment to the cause of the restoration of Sultan Wajid Ali Shah whom it always praised. Its greatest grouse against the Company government was the treatment it had meted out to the Sultan. In its view the Company government was not only a usurper and betrayer of faith but also deceitful and tyrannical. These views were openly expressed in the pages of *Sehr-e-Samiri* in order to influence public opinion. It also sought to dissuade people from accepting the offer of jobs by the Company government which it regarded as a betrayal of faith against the Sultan.

The main stylistic endeavour of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* was to offer criticism disguised in the pleasant garb of irony and satire. These attacks were made in each issue of the newspaper and were aimed at alienating the common people from the British rulers. Some of its statements were highly provocative and arose from a hidden though powerful desire for revenge. In a way the *Sehr-e-Samiri* may be regarded as an organ of public

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opinion that voiced forth the sentiments of the common people of Lucknow. On certain occasions it attacked its targets with the full thrusts of the sword and was not satisfied with mere pin-pricks.

The *Sehr-e-Samiri* had a clear realization of the future dangers hidden in the expansionist policies of the Company government. Like its many fellow-citizens of Lucknow, it knew that the process of annexation would one day devour the remaining native states in the country and also that the nadir of the misery of the Indian people had not yet been reached. In any case, the *Sehr-e-Samiri* faithfully portrayed the conditions and feelings of the people of Lucknow at that time. It is a mirror that honestly reflects the life of the common people and brings to light the deceitfulness, duplicity and oppressive policies of the British, particularly in relation to the contemporary state of Oudh.

Akhbar E'jaz, Lucknow

In the pages of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* there appeared advertisements regarding the publication of other local and outside newspapers. It is through the scrutiny of these advertisements that we come to possess information about these other newspapers. We have gathered a few facts about *Akhbar E'jaz* from the pages of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* since the newspaper itself is not extant. The *Akhbar E'jaz* was first issued in November or December 1856. In the issue dated 5 January 1857 of *Sehr-e-Samiri* we have an advertisement of *Akhbar E'jaz*. The following information about the latter is gathered from the same advertisement.

The owner and editor of *Akhbar E'jaz* was a court chronicler of the Sultan's time, one by the name of Beni Prasad. He had started a printing press at Nawaz Ganj. The manager of the press was Lala Durga Prasad. The newspaper was printed on Thursdays and published on Fridays. The subscription rates were as follows:

Monthly: 12 as.
Advance Half-yearly: Rs. 4/-
Advance yearly: Rs. 7-8 as.
Yearly: Rs. 10-8 as.

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The following extract from the advertisement may be of interest:

> The scribe of this advertisement was a chronicler during the days of the Sultan; right from infancy he was concerned with the compilation of news. Now that a general revolution has taken place, those who were prosperous and happy once are now lost in misery. In my lack of employment I engaged myself in many activities but found solace in none. One day, certain close friends came to me and uttered words of comfort. After mutual consultations they advised me to engage myself in some activity and not to waste myself in idle unemployment. They suggested that I should start a newspaper since compilation of news had always been my profession. I had willy-nilly to accept their suggestion since hurting their feelings by disregarding their advice was beyond me. In all humility I have called this newspaper *E'jaz* (a miracle). The scribe is known as Beni Prasad; the press is located at Nawab Ganj.

Though a number of newspapers were published from Lucknow before the rebellion of 1857, yet the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* has mentioned only *Akhbar E'jaz*: "*E'jaz*: this newspaper was published from Lucknow in January 1857." It is not correct that *E'jaz* was first published in January 1857. We learn from the *Sehr-e-Samiri* that the paper was in circulation during the closing days of 1856. That it was in existence in January 1857 is beyond dispute.

Makhzan-al-Akhbar, Lucknow

Siddiqui has made no reference to the *E'jaz* though he seems to have consulted both the *Sehr-e-Samiri* and *Akhtar Shahenshahi*. He has also erred with regard to *Makhzan-al-Akhbar*. He writes:

> The pages of *Sehr-e-Samiri* give the indication of another newspaper. It was called the *Makhzan-al-Akhbar*. Maulvi Ghulam Rasool Zuha had composed the verse chronogram which was published in the *Sehr-e-Samiri* (The actual words of the chronogram are: "Tab'a gardeed Makhzan-al-Akhbar".) ... We have no means of finding out more about

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this newspaper. The author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* too has made no reference to it. It is probable that the newspaper was first issued in November or December 1856.[1]

There was an advertisement of *Makhzan-al-Akhbar* in the *Sehr-e-Samiri*, Vol. I, No. 8, dated 5 January 1857 from which we can gather some information about the newspaper. The name of the editor af *Makhzan-al-Akhbar* was Abdullah and the press was located in Sarai Mu'ali Khan. The language of *Makhzan-al-Akhbar* was highly rhymed and ornate.

It was published every Sunday. The number of pages was twelve. The monthly subscripiton was Re. 1/- and the annual (advance) Rs. 10/-. If the money was not paid in advance, the annual subscription was Rs. 15/-. The advertisement rate was eight annas per line.

The advertisement in *Sehr-e-Samiri* is as follows:

We bring tidings to the men of Arts; good news for men of knowledge: a new newspaper from Lucknow has started publication; the pen is shedding drops (of rain) as from a cloud. Let the buyers of Meaning open their purses: cheap are the pearls of Meaning. When men of discrimination see them, they will certainly lose their heart. The name is *Makhzan-al-Akhbar* (the treasury of news); it is a treasury of gems fit for a king. The language is cultured, heart-captivating Urdu; the speech in accordance with current idiom. Fully idiomatic is the style—neither rhymed nor ornate is the style. Full attention is given to ease and flow, suppleness and correctness of compounds. If rhymes occasionally occur as the pen writes, they will serve as ornaments for the Bride of Prose. Colourfulness for its own sake is avoided; clarity is infused. Utmost simplicity is best; sophistication is abstained from. Finding out rhymes is not difficult but (rhymed prose) lacks happy informality. News are likeable; speech is clear. Rhyming is against the norms of good chronicling. Verbal ambiguity should proceed from meaning; regard to the order of occurrance spoils the beauty of language. If God willing, the news will be thoroughly scrutinised before publication. Rumours shall not be given

1. *Hindustani Akhbar Nawisi*, p. 317.

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any credence; baseless things shall find no place in our pages. Correctness shall be our endeavour. News from abroad are to be culled from English-language papers. Some will be borrowed from Hindi (Urdu) and Persion newspapers. People shall begin to have faith in us when they come to know us. The press is located at the Sarai of Ma'ali; Sunday is the day of printing; the editor is your slave Abdullah. Six sheets every week. One rupee a month; ten rupees annually in advance. The price shall be Rs. 15/- if the year passes out. Anything of general interest shall be printed freely, but if the interest is particular the charge shall be eight annas per line.

While repeated claims are made in the advertisement quoted above that rhyme is to be eschewed from its pages, the advertisement itself is full of jingling rhyme. The editor seems to be fully aware of the baneful effects of rhyming in prose, yet he himself is a greater culprit than any other of his contemporaries.

The advertisement is of great value as it gives us so well an idea of the style of *Makhzan-al-Akhbar* apart from other useful information. It also shows that Siddiqui's claim "we have no means of finding out more about this newspaper" is not correct. He seems to have overlooked the advertisement.

Ashraf-al-Akhbar, Lucknow

Neither the author of *Akhtar Shahenshahi* nor Siddiqui has made any reference to *Ashraf-al-Akhbar*. There is, however, an advertisement of this newspaper in *Sehr-e-Samiri*, dated 9 March 1857. Most probably it was first issued in March or April 1857. The advertisement reads as follows:

Let the reader and the audience hear that this newspaper will be printed every Saturday from Mohalla Ismail Ganj in the city of Lucknow under the editorship of Saiyyid Wajid Ali Bilgrami. It will be distributed on Sundays. News of different places and countries will be translated from English-language newspapers as far as possible. Full care shall be taken about the correctness and truthfulness of the news published. We will pay no regard to either praise or blame. It is not proper to malign good people, and bad

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men do not become good by mere praise. We did not want to extort any thing from anyone as the price of the newspaper. However, we could not afford not to take money as the price of the newspaper. We ourselves did not have enough to bear all the expenses. We have, therefore, openly expressed our mind: items of particular interest shall be charged at the rate of half an anna per line. Things of general interest, however, shall be printed free of charge. The newspaper shall be sent bearing to the subscribers; they shall have to pay the postage. The monthly subscription rate is one rupee. The advance annual payment is ten rupees. If the payment is not made in advance, the subscription shall be fifteen rupees.

Ma'dan-al-Akhbar, Lucknow

An advertisement of *Madan-al-Akhbar* appeared in the *Sehr-e-Samiri* dated 16 March 1857. This advertisement is our only source of information about this newspaper. Other sources are silent about its establishment or circulation. This newspaper was probably first issued in March 1857. Below we give a few lines from the advertisement which itself is quite long:

Now is the advent of spring. Deserts are blooming. Animals are full of cheer. Nightingales are crowding around the groves. There is life and enthusiasm among the youth; they have totally forgotten the cares of the two worlds. Tears came to my eyes to see all this. My heart quietly told me that all this beauty and colour of the world is transient. How can it be trusted when it is all the time changing. Man should do things that may benefit others. We, therefore, intend to publish a newspaper. We have reduced the price owing to the economic difficulties (of the readers). The monthly subscription rate is fourteen annas. One who pays in advance shall pay nine rupees annually. After the year has passed the charge shall be thirteen rupees. Even an anna shall not be reduced from the subscription rate. The name of the newspaper is *Ma'dan-al-Akhbar*. A glance at the paper is a must. Anyone subscribing to it from outside Lucknow shall have to pay the postage himself. The paper shall be printed on Thursday and distributed on Fridays.

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> Those who wish to discontinue subscription shall inform thereabout after the second issue or bear the loss themselves.

'Ayar-al-Akhbar, Lucknow

A study of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* reveals that another Urdu newspaper, known as *'Ayar-al-Akhbar* was published from Lucknow in March 1857. Its owner and editor was Saiyyid Aftab Ali. It was a weekly newspaper published every Sunday. The monthly subscription rate was eight annas, and the annual five rupees. If the money was not paid in advance the rate was seven and a half rupees. If the advertisement is any indication of the style of the newspaper, its language must have been highly rhymed and colourful—so characteristic of Lucknow. We quote the advertisement below:

> The bird of the pen chants in the colourful garden of prose. The bud of its beak scatters flowers in a new style. The scratching sound of the pen has the harmony of the melodious nightingale. The page resembles the skirt of the bride of breeze. Everyday new flowers bloom. Critics find thousands of the treasuries of the flower of desire. It is because of this reason that a number of friends who are fond of news and who want to understand the current world requested this sinful slave, Saiyyid Aftab Ali, to issue a newspaper. The more I refused, the more they insisted. Ultimately the idea came to my mind that the lovers of newspapers may be given news of every city and place. No stone should be left unturned in this regard. Therefore, the newspaper came to be printed weekly every Sunday since the end of Rajab. The aim is to write good expressive Urdu in as ornate a manner as possible. The name of the newspaper is *'Ayar-al-Akhtar*; it publishes all the news.

It is quite possible that a few other newspapers too, were published from Lucknow as is indirectly indicated in the advertisement quoted above. However, we have no other means except *Sehr-e-Samiri* by which we can gather information about other newspapers published from Lucknow. Unfortunately, even in the *Sehr-e-Samiri* we have no quotations or extracts from other contemporary newspapers of Lucknow; only the

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advertisements of the issue of the newspapers are published. It is in the light of these advertisements that a few meagre facts with regard to the publication data can be gathered.

The above discussion shows that at least five[1] Urdu newspapers were published from Lucknow between the annexation of Oudh and the great rebellion of 1857. In their great influence and popularity they point to the fact that the people of Lucknow had been deprived of newspapers till the date of the annexation. Their popularity also indicates that there was an almost volcano-like eruption with the grant of the freedom of the press after the annexation. Newspapers came to be issued one after the other. An important fact to remember is that a study of the *Sehr-e-Samiri* does not throw any light on the fact whether there were any newspapers published from Lucknow before the first issue of the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* and the *Sehr-e-Samiri*. These two newspapers are quite silent about the fact.

1. There were seven newspapers if we include the *Tilism-e-Lucknow* and the *Sehr-e-Samiri*.

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